

ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN®

ISSUE

106

ULTIMATE KNIGHTS: PART 1

MARVEL

BENDIS

BAGLEY

HENNESSY

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PREVIOUSLY IN ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN...

The bite of a genetically-altered spider granted high school student Peter Parker incredible, arachnid-like powers! When a burglar killed his beloved Uncle Ben, a grief-stricken Peter vowed to use his amazing abilities to protect his fellow man. He learned the invaluable lesson that with great power must also come great responsibility...

Now the fledgling super hero tries to balance a full high school curriculum, a night job as a web designer for the Daily Bugle tabloid, a friendship with the beautiful Mary Jane Watson, and swing time as the misunderstood, web-slinging Spider-Man.

Recently, Doctor Octopus was secretly making clones of Peter Parker. The clones escaped from their laboratory and made a mess out of the real Peter's life. In the bedlam that followed, the clones destroyed the Parker home, MJ was injected with the Oz formula (the substance that mutated the spider that gave Peter his powers), and Aunt May suffered a near-fatal heart attack after discovering Peter's double life as Spider-Man.

Reed Richards (super-genius leader of the super-hero team, the Fantastic Four) seems to have cured MJ of any mutations caused by the Oz formula, and Peter and MJ have gotten back together...meaning that Peter's troubled relationship with Kitty Pryde (of the mutant team, the X-Men) is effectively in shambles.

Since gaining his powers, Spider-Man has had several confrontations with New York crime boss Wilson Fisk (A.K.A. the Kingpin of Crime) and a couple of run-ins with the guardian of Hell's Kitchen, the mystery man known as Daredevil.

They are not friends.



ULTIMATE KNIGHTS

PART 1

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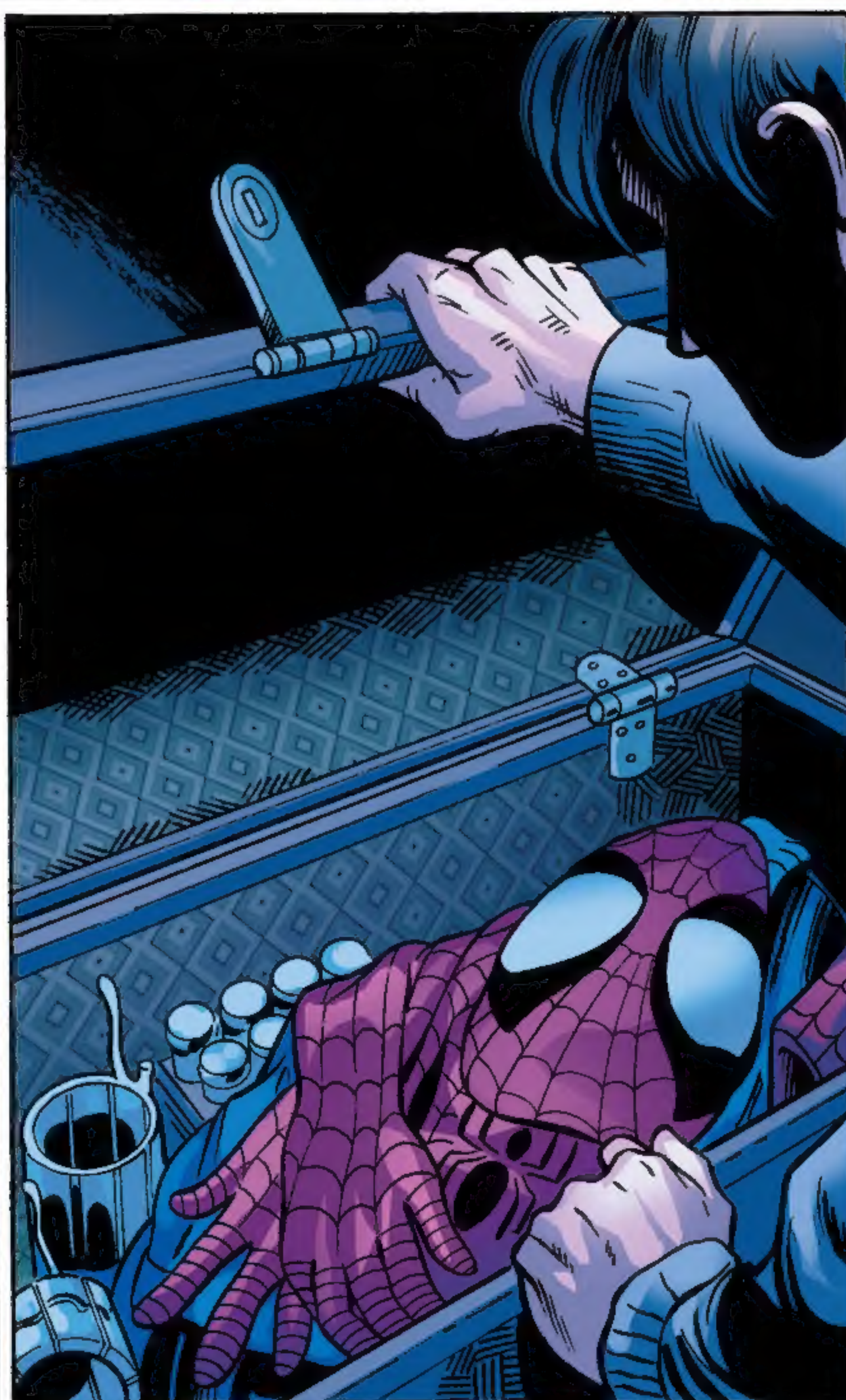


Okay, this is relatively untouched by the bedlam that is my life.

Small favors.



CLICK
CLACK



Phone's dead.

Great. I have to call my now *ex*-girlfriend Kitty and *tell* her that we are no longer dating...

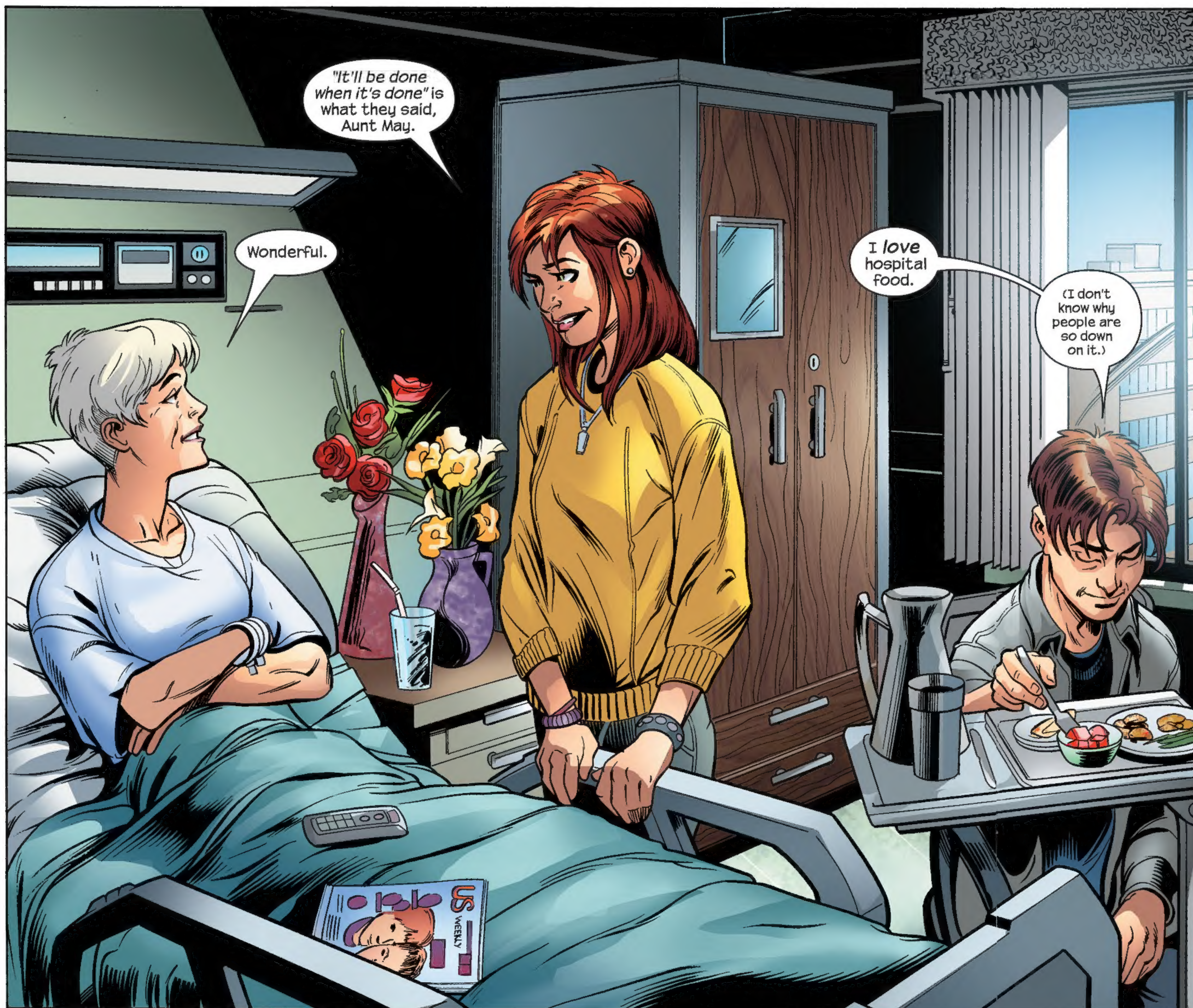
So she can come over here and beat the holy snot out of me for being a two-timing snake, which is what I am.

And every minute that goes by that I *don't* tell her is not making this any *easier*.

Oy!

Exactly, and I'm not even Jewish.

"How long will this 'Damage Control' *take*?"

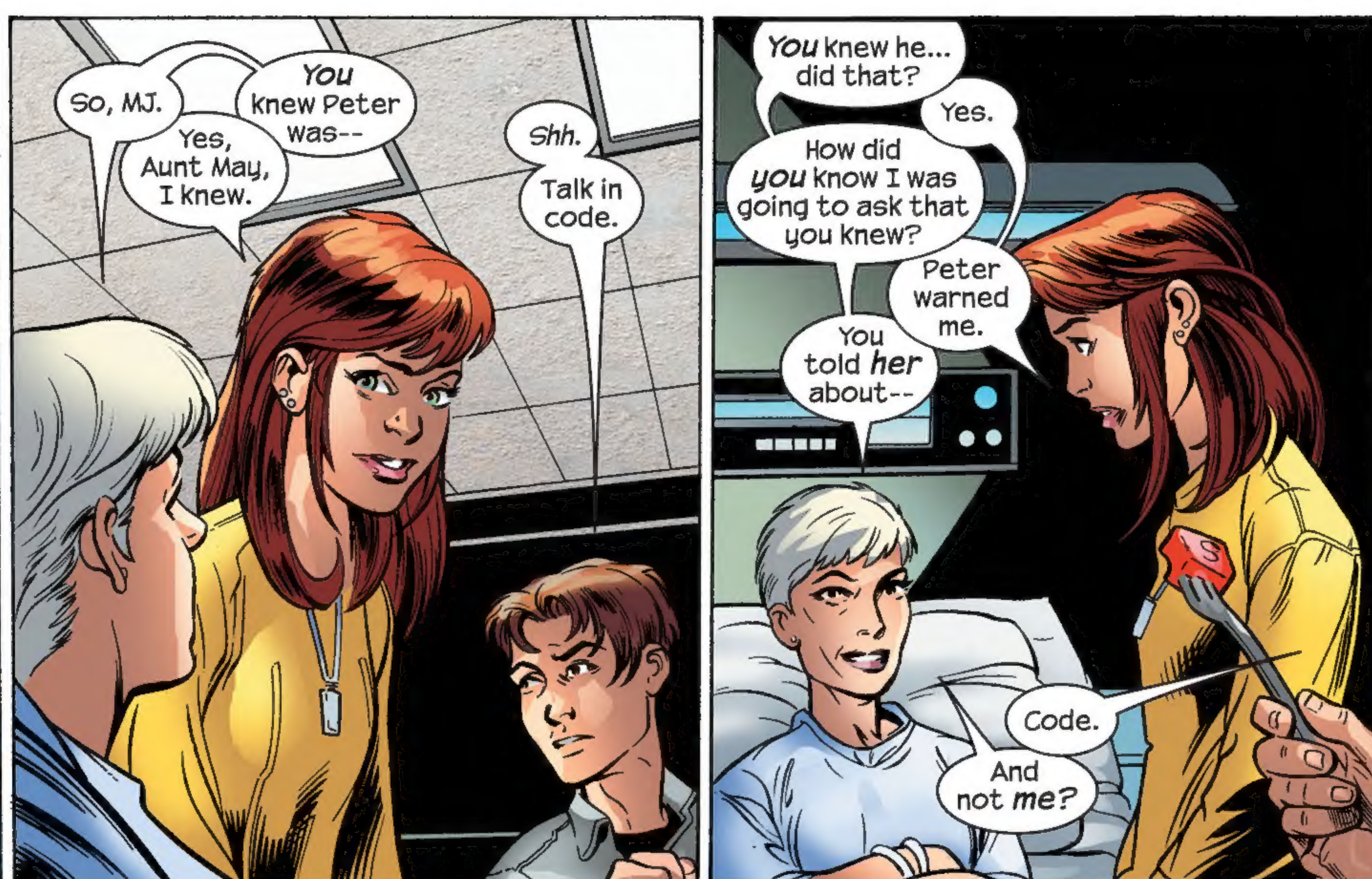


"It'll be done when it's done" is what they said, Aunt May.

Wonderful.

I love hospital food.

(I don't know why people are so down on it.)



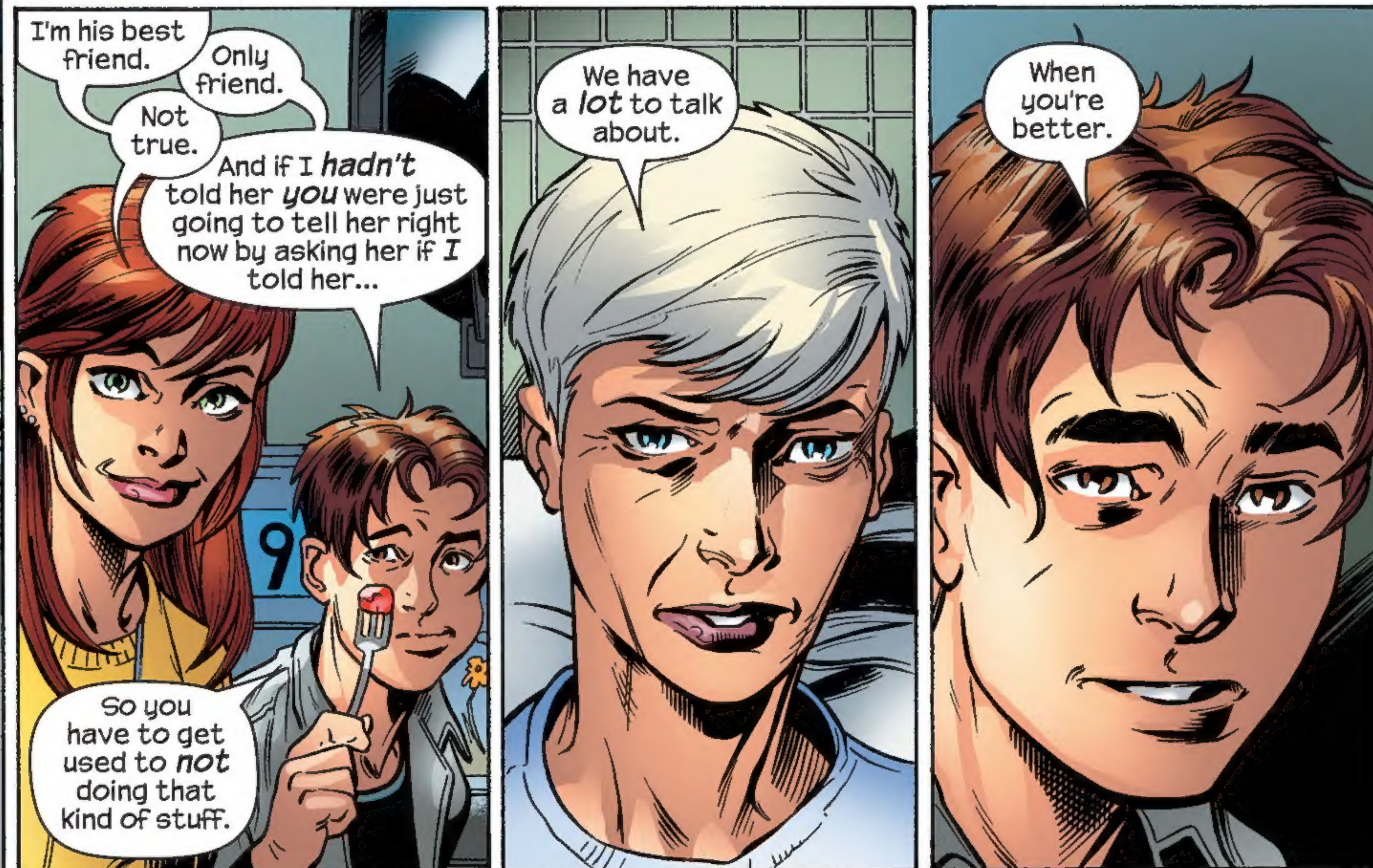
So, MJ. Yes, Aunt May, I knew.

You knew Peter was--

Shh. Talk in code.

You knew he... did that? Yes. How did you know I was going to ask that you knew? Peter warned me. You told her about--

Code. And not me?



I'm his best friend.

Only friend.

Not true.

And if I hadn't told her you were just going to tell her right now by asking her if I told her...

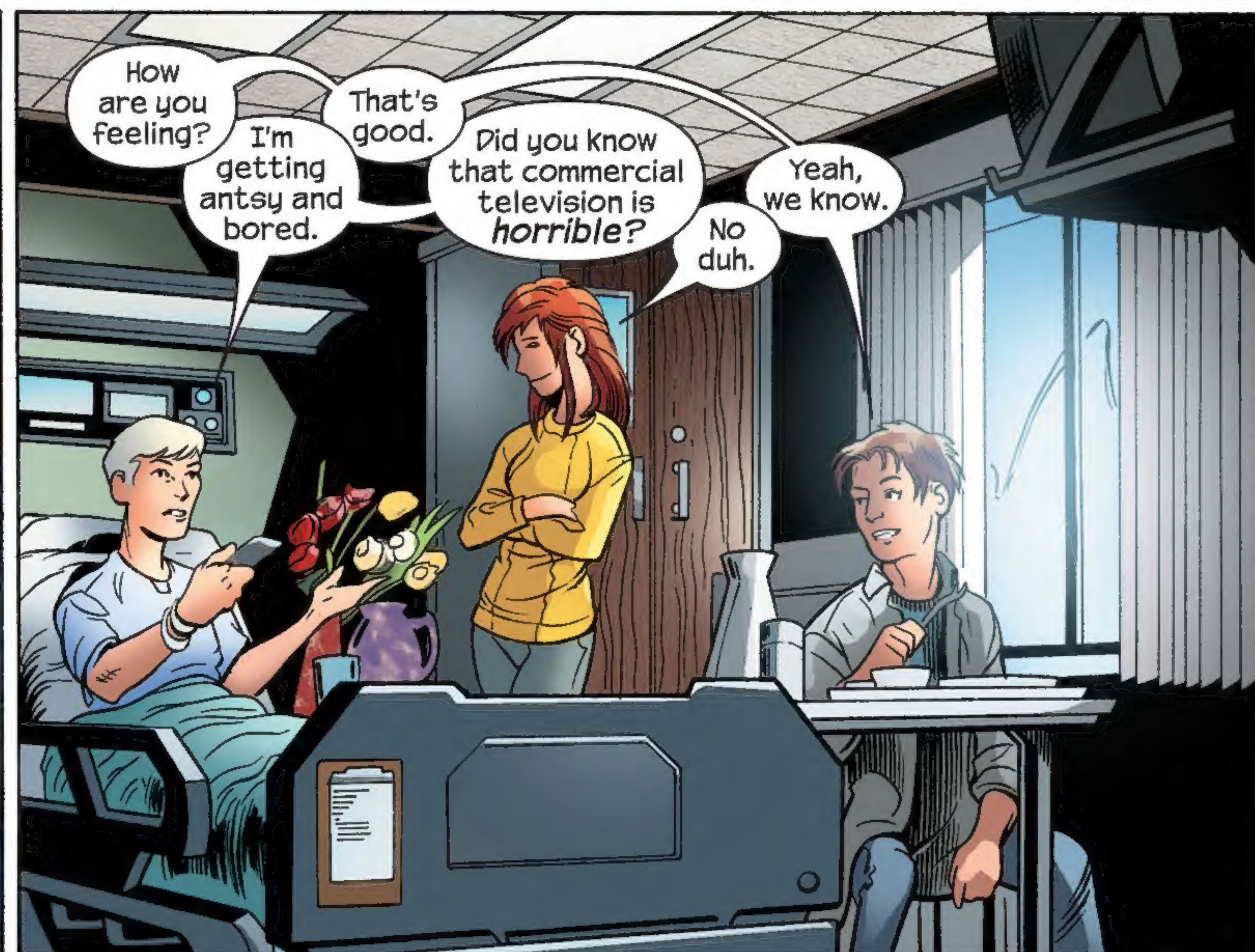
So you have to get used to *not* doing that kind of stuff.

We have a lot to talk about.

When you're better.



Fair enough.



How are you feeling?

I'm getting antsy and bored.

That's good.

Did you know that commercial television is horrible?

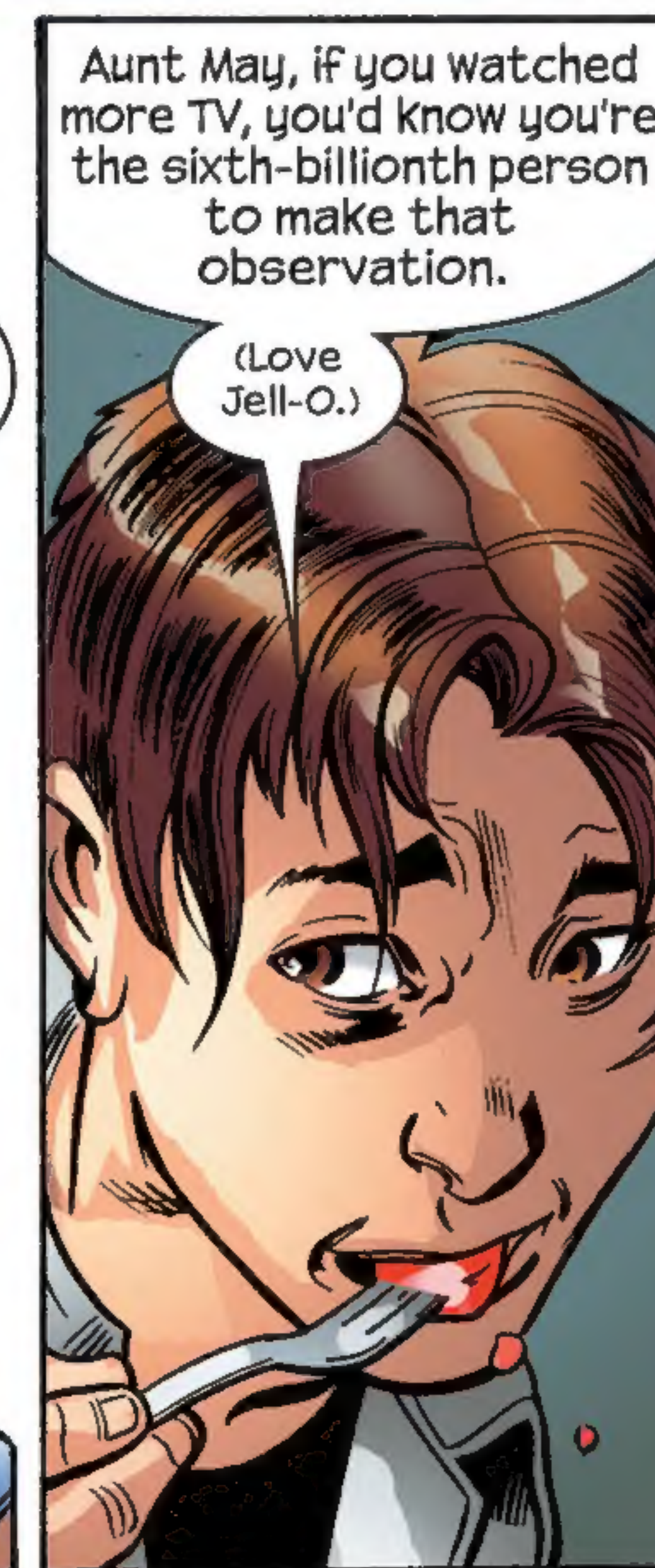
No duh.

Yeah, we know.



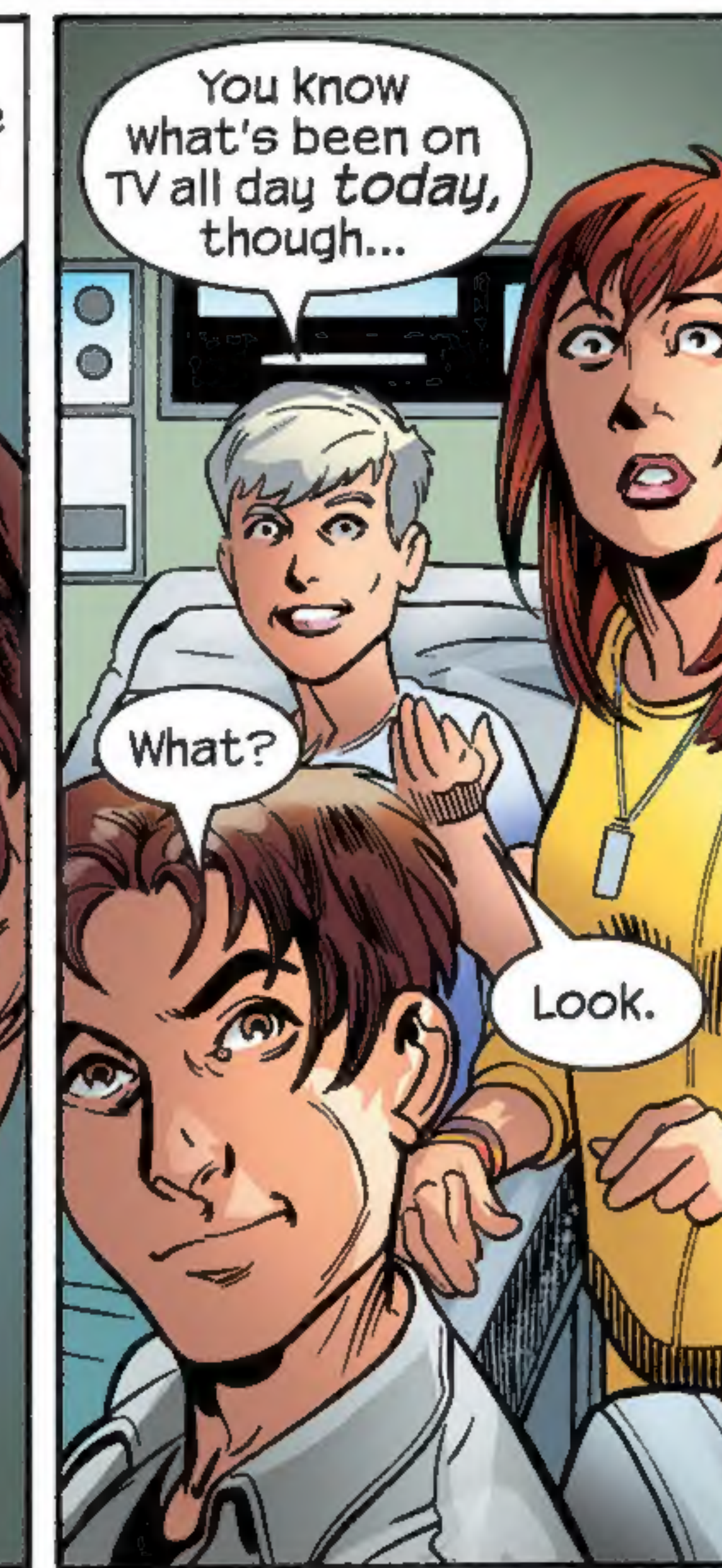
Why do they call it "reality TV"? It's *not*.

It's just game shows without sets. There's nothing *real* about it.



Aunt May, if you watched more TV, you'd know you're the sixth-billionth person to make that observation.

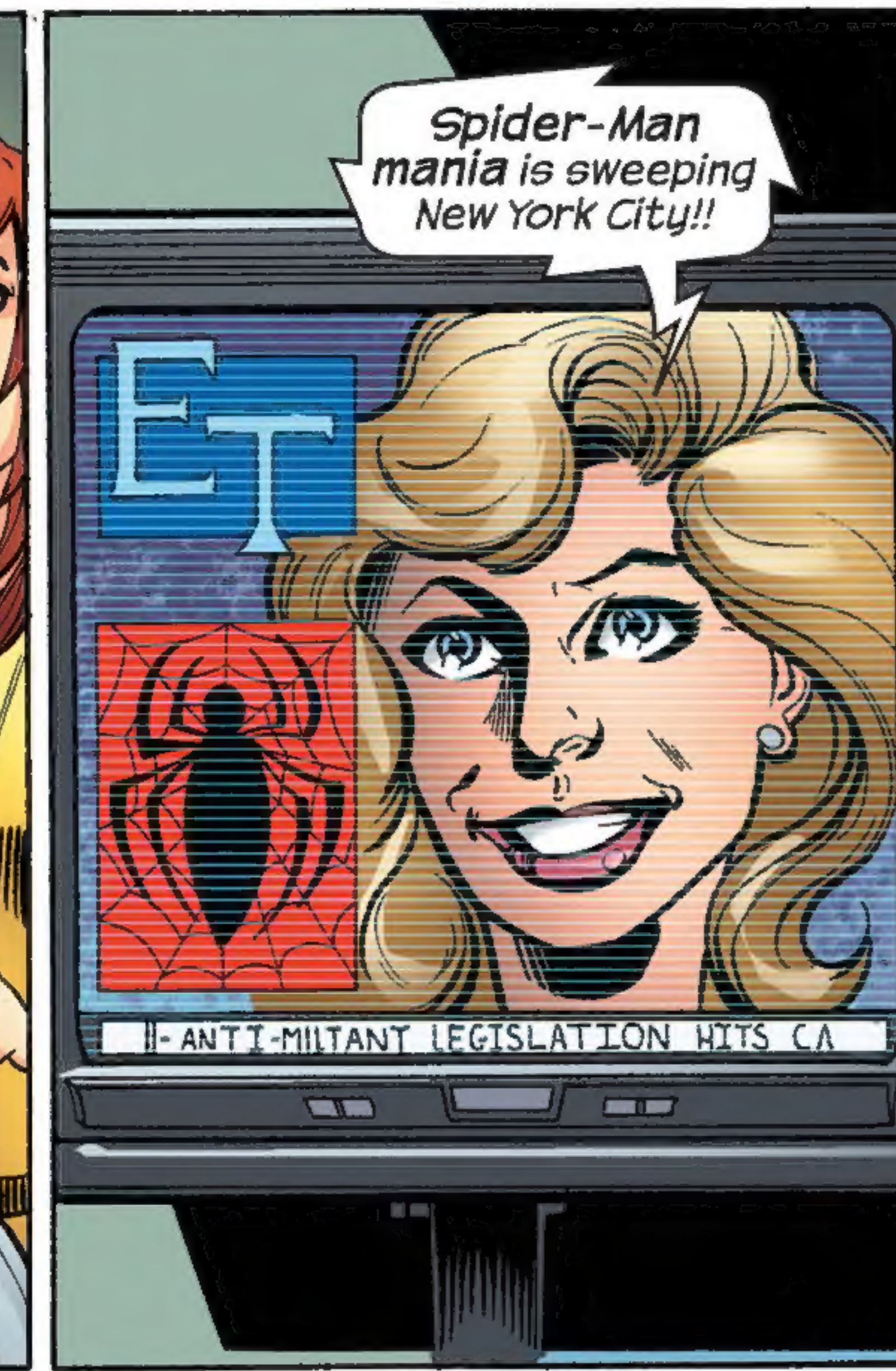
(Love Jell-O.)



You know what's been on TV all day today, though...

What?

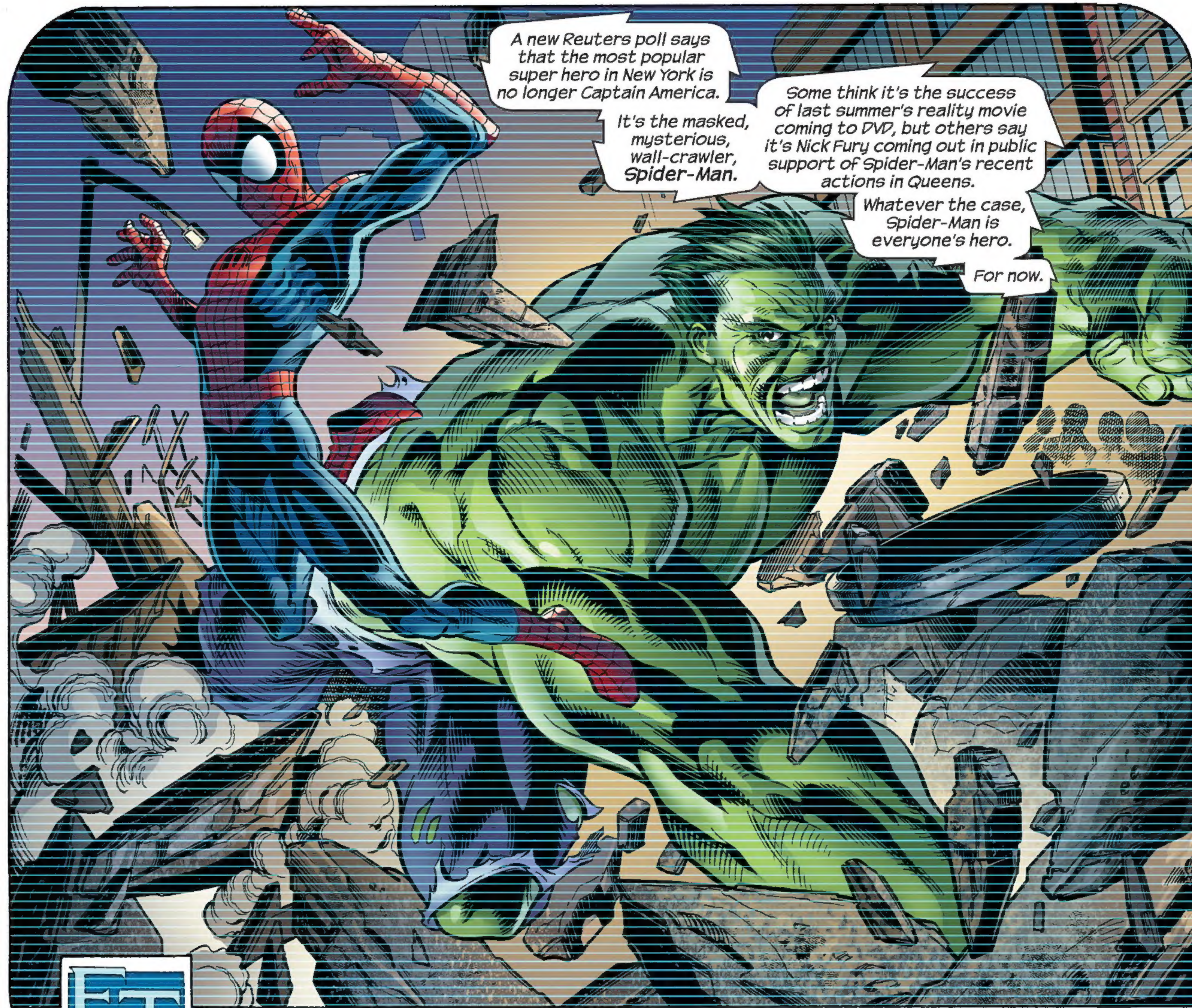
Look.



Spider-Man mania is sweeping New York City!!



ANTI-MILITANT LEGISLATION HITS CA



A new Reuters poll says that the most popular super hero in New York is no longer Captain America.

It's the masked, mysterious, wall-crawler, Spider-Man.

Some think it's the success of last summer's reality movie coming to DVD, but others say it's Nick Fury coming out in public support of Spider-Man's recent actions in Queens.

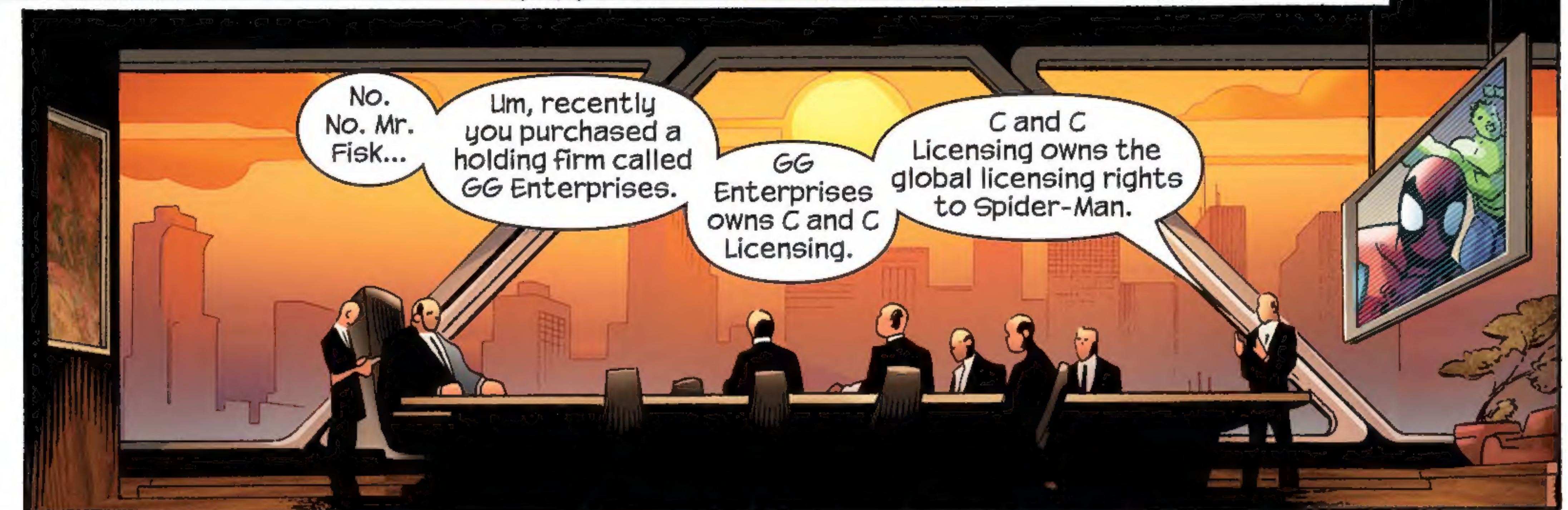
Whatever the case, Spider-Man is everyone's hero.

For now.



Why are you showing me this?

Are you trying to upset me?

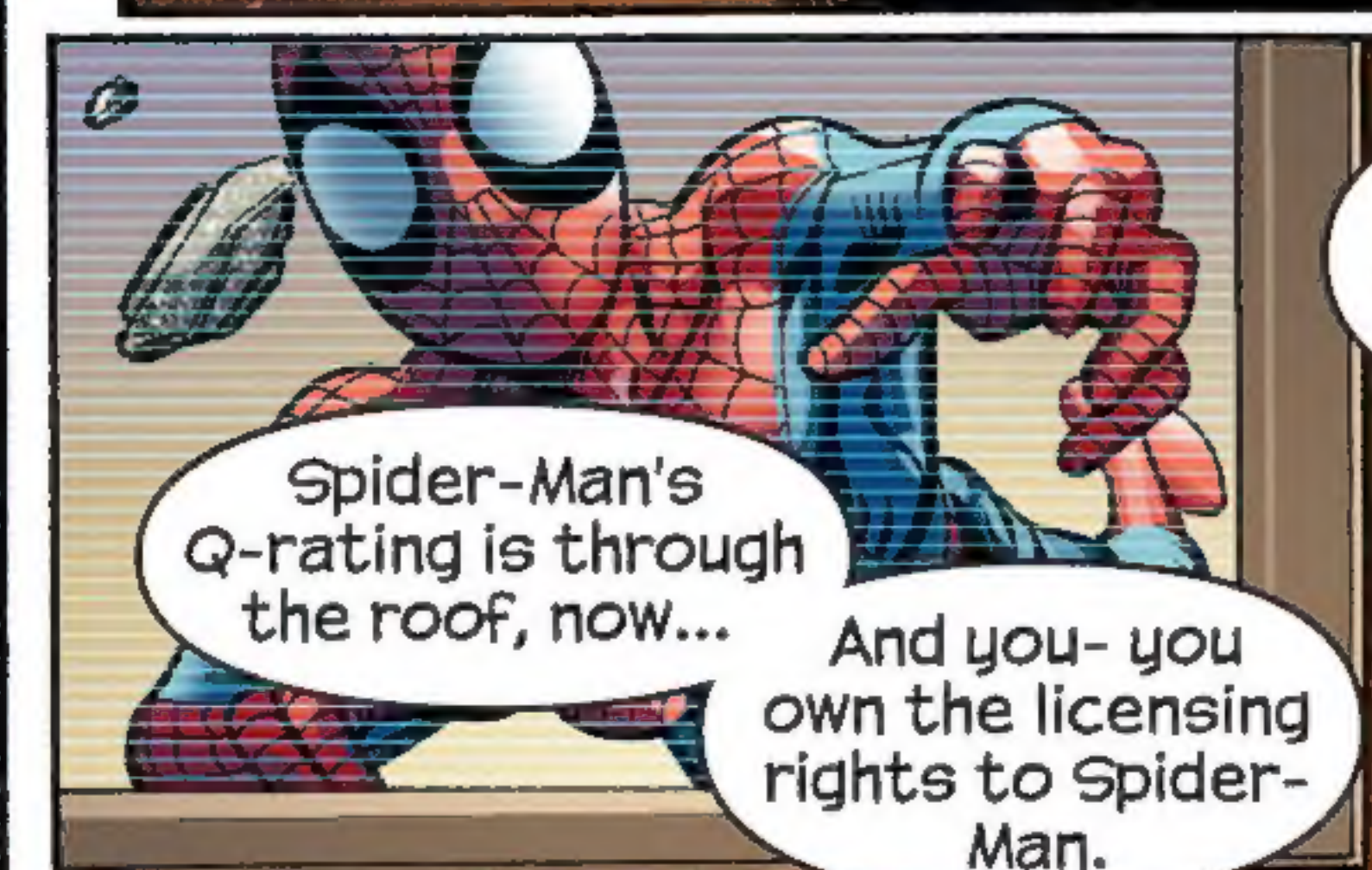


No. No. Mr. Fisk...

Um, recently you purchased a holding firm called GG Enterprises.

GG Enterprises owns C and C Licensing.

C and C Licensing owns the global licensing rights to Spider-Man.



Spider-Man's Q-rating is through the roof, now...

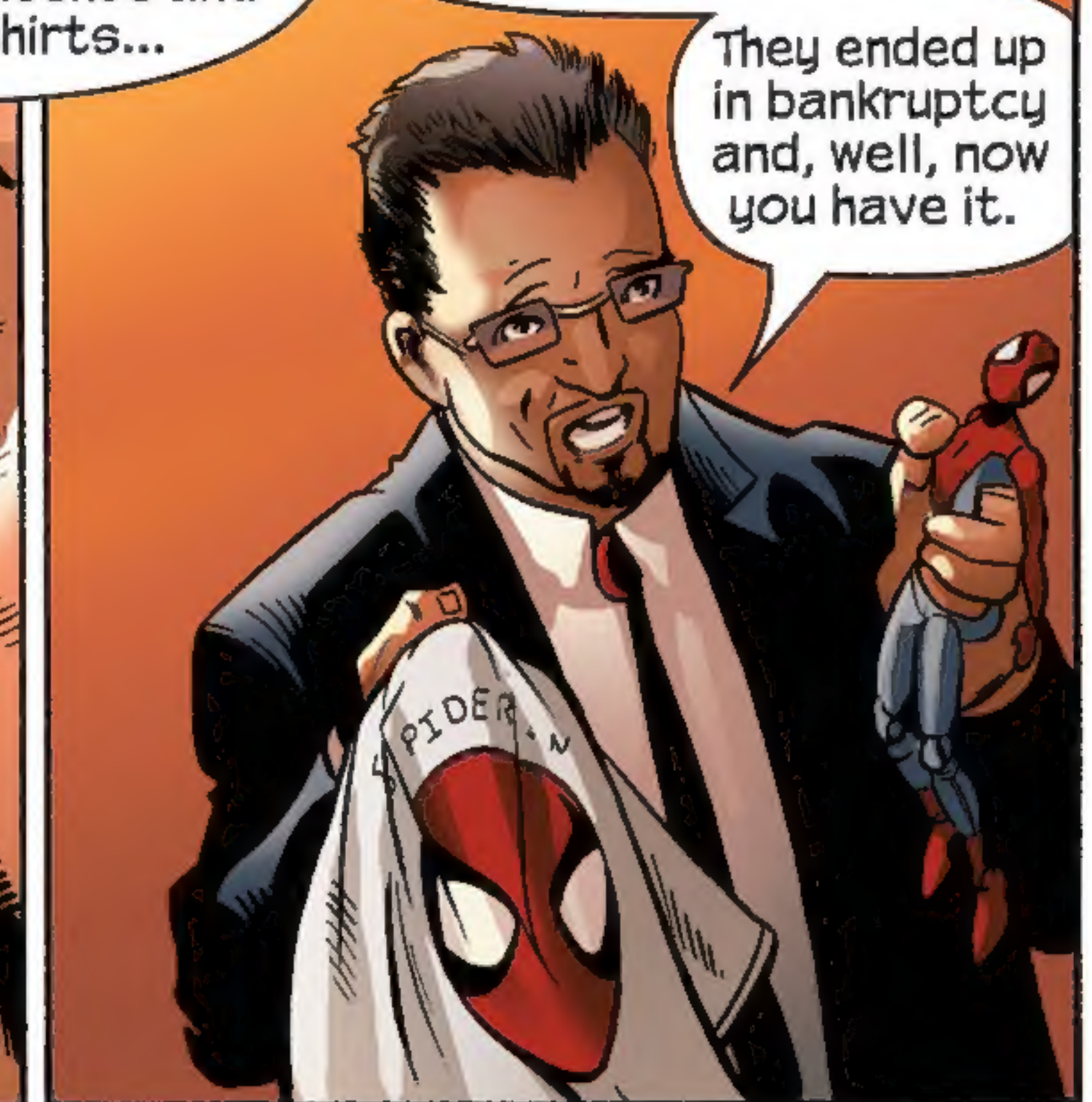
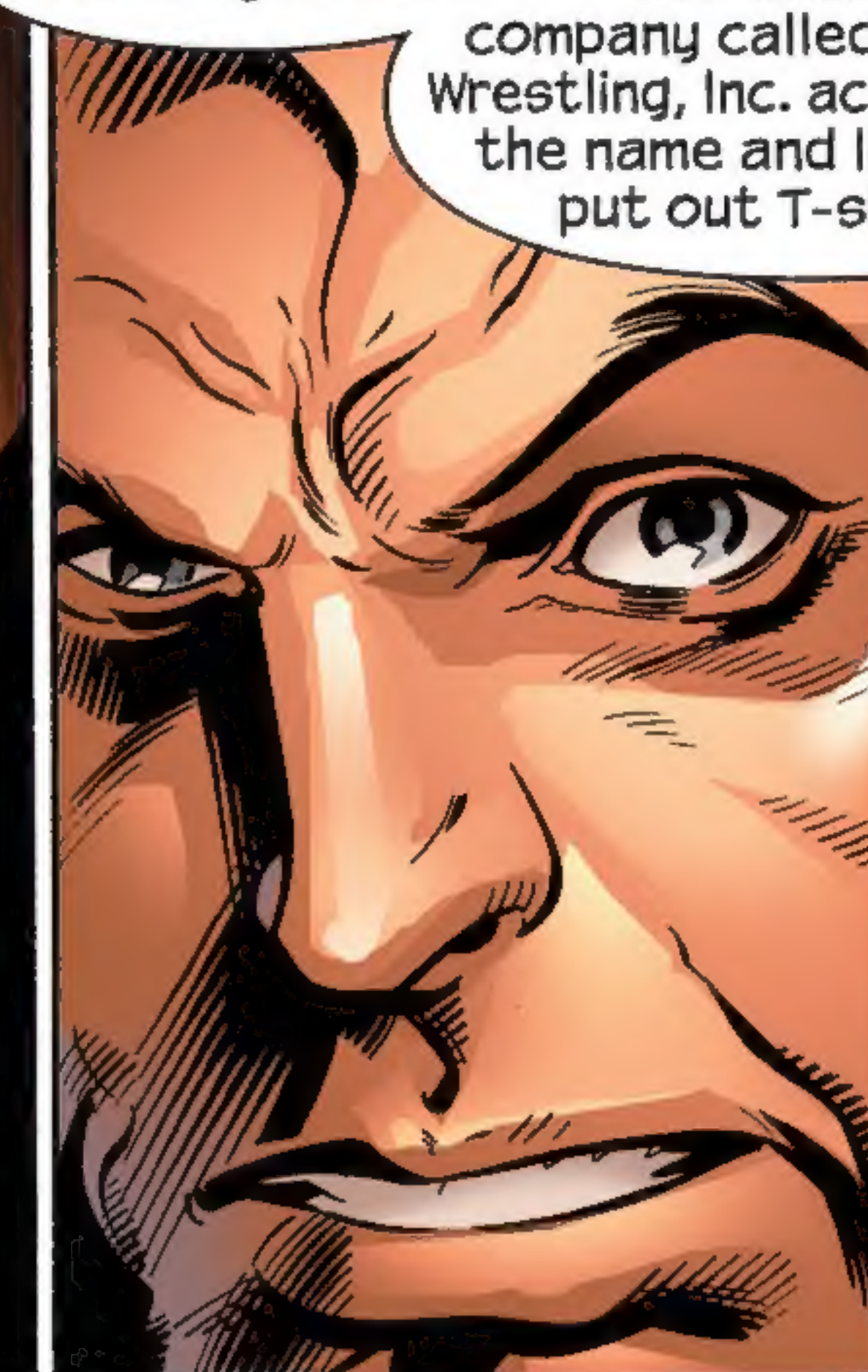
And you- you own the licensing rights to Spider-Man.

Yes, see, Spider-Man started out on the low-rent wrestling circuit.

This wrestling company called Hercules Wrestling, Inc. actually owned the name and license and put out T-shirts...

And when that movie came out last summer and did huge business- the studio stepped on Hercules Wrestling, Inc.'s neck and didn't let them put any Spider-Man stuff out at all.

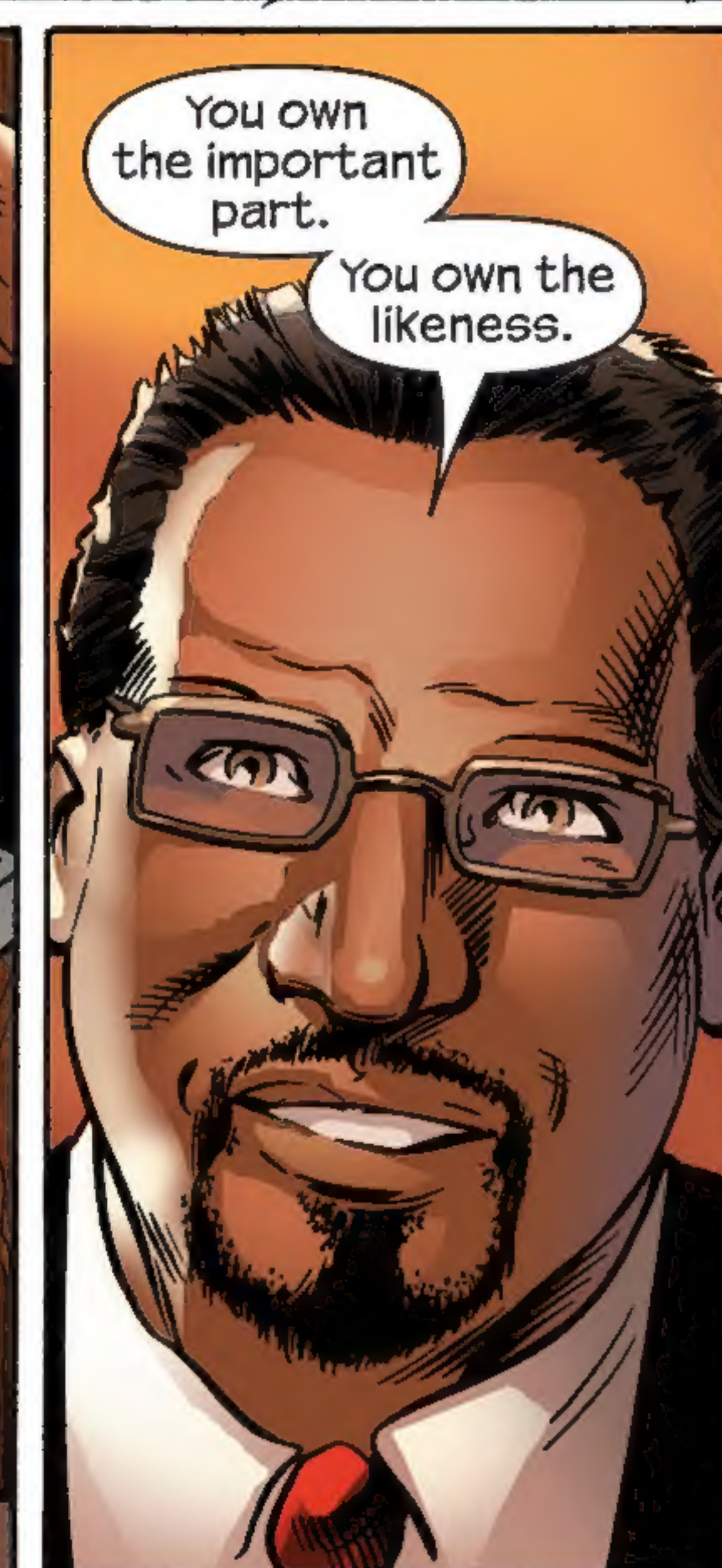
They ended up in bankruptcy and, well, now you have it.



You have about a nine-month window for merchandising on his wave of popularity--

H-here is an estimated cash value of the investment and what the return is, based on some of the figures we have from Tony Stark's Ultimates franchise *and* what the army has made off of the Fantastic Four license--

I own Spider-Man.



You own the important part.

You own the likeness.



Take any sublicense offer.

Take any media offer.

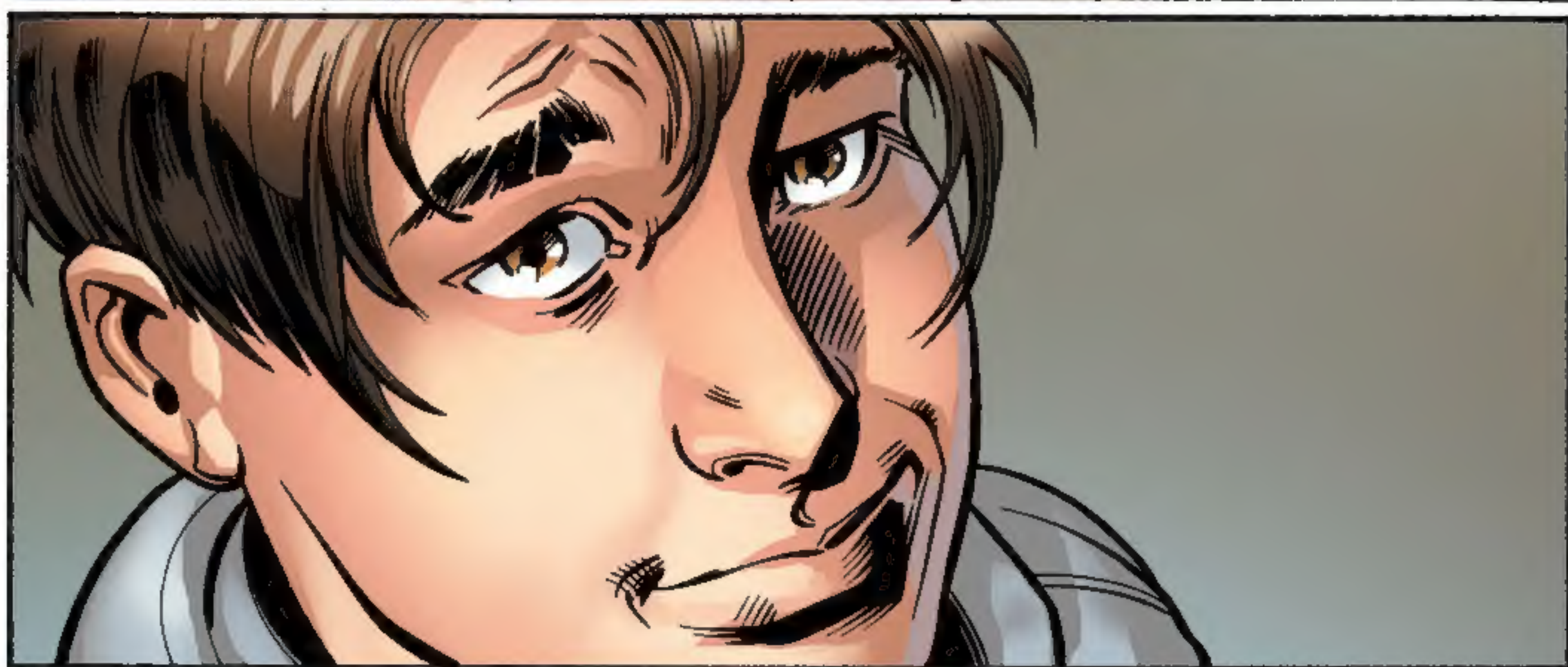
Go to town. Flood the market.

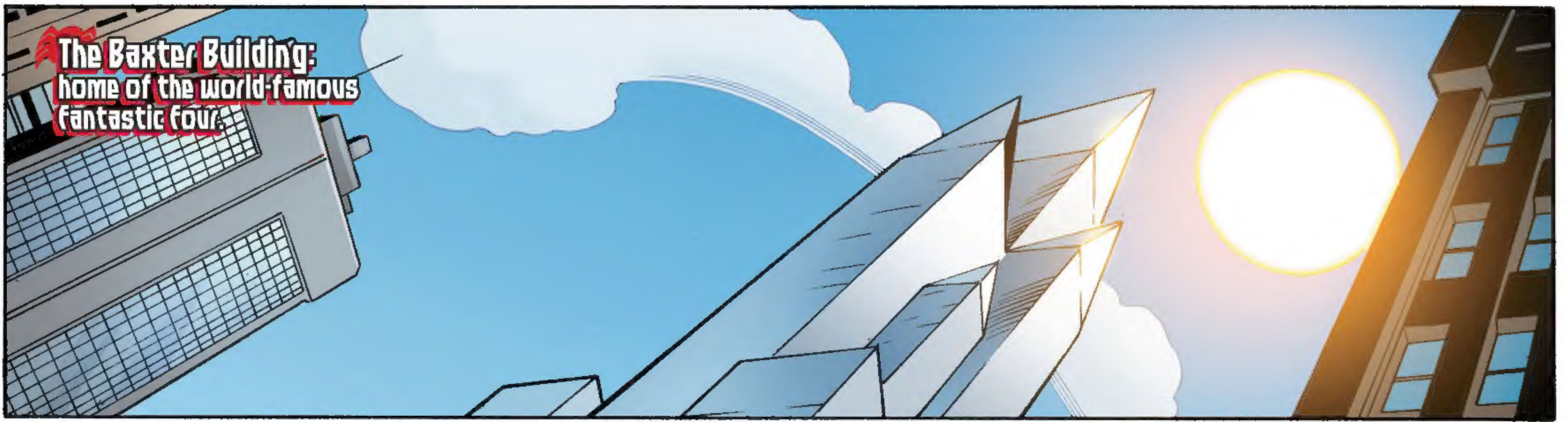


Run it into the ground?

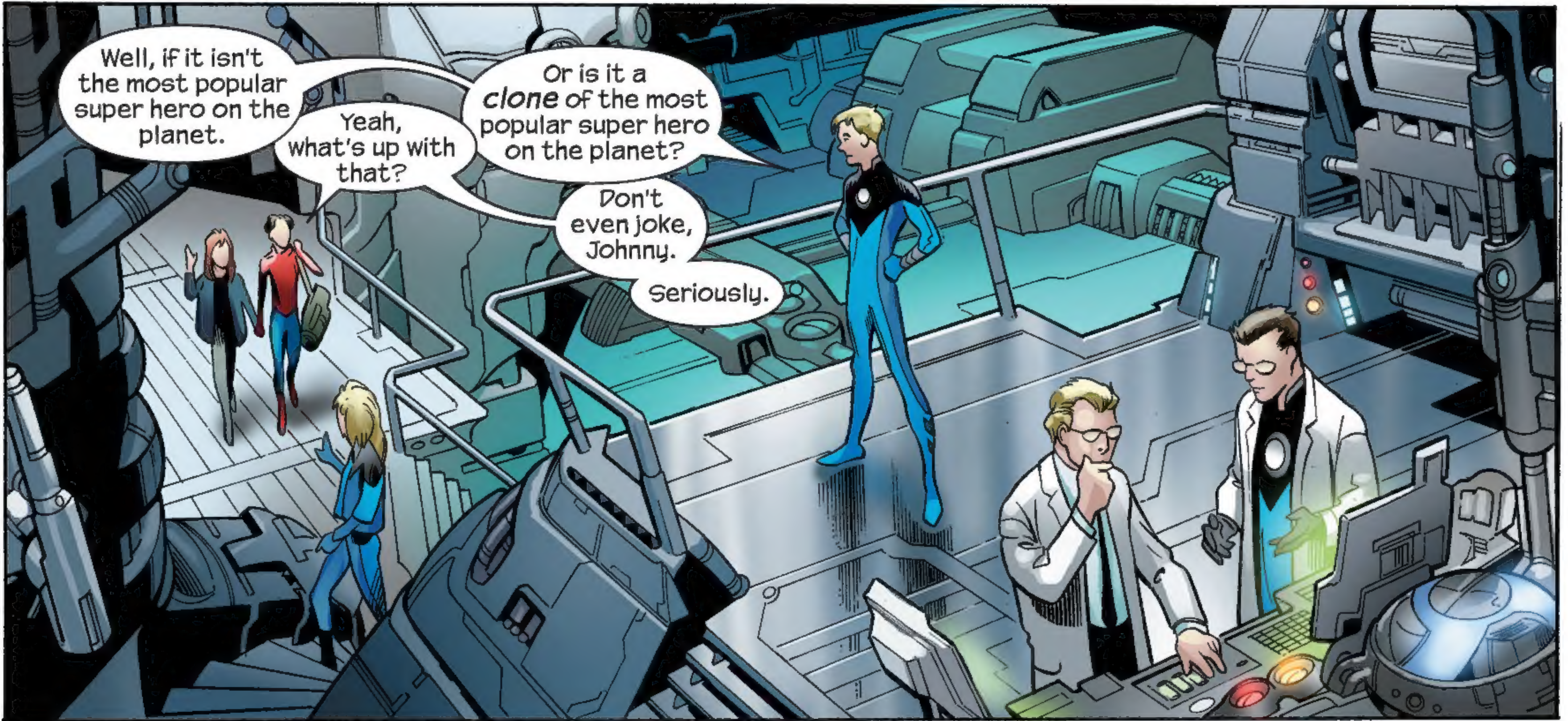


Exactly.





The Baxter Building:
home of the world-famous
Fantastic Four.



Well, if it isn't
the most popular
super hero on the
planet.

Yeah,
what's up with
that?

Or is it a
clone of the most
popular super hero
on the planet?

Don't
even joke,
Johnny.

Seriously.



It's Fury manipulating the
media for you, to quell his
guilt about how he has
treated you.

I thought
that too,
Sue.

Oh,
it *is*.

MJ, hi, I
just wanted to
do some follow-up
checks on you.

You went through
what we refer to as a
*traumatic genetic
event*.



Doctor Storm and
I want to just do
some tests.

How
long will this
take?

About
an hour.

Will it
hurt?

Not
even a
little.

Are you
cool if I swing
across the
street--?

Yeah,
go.

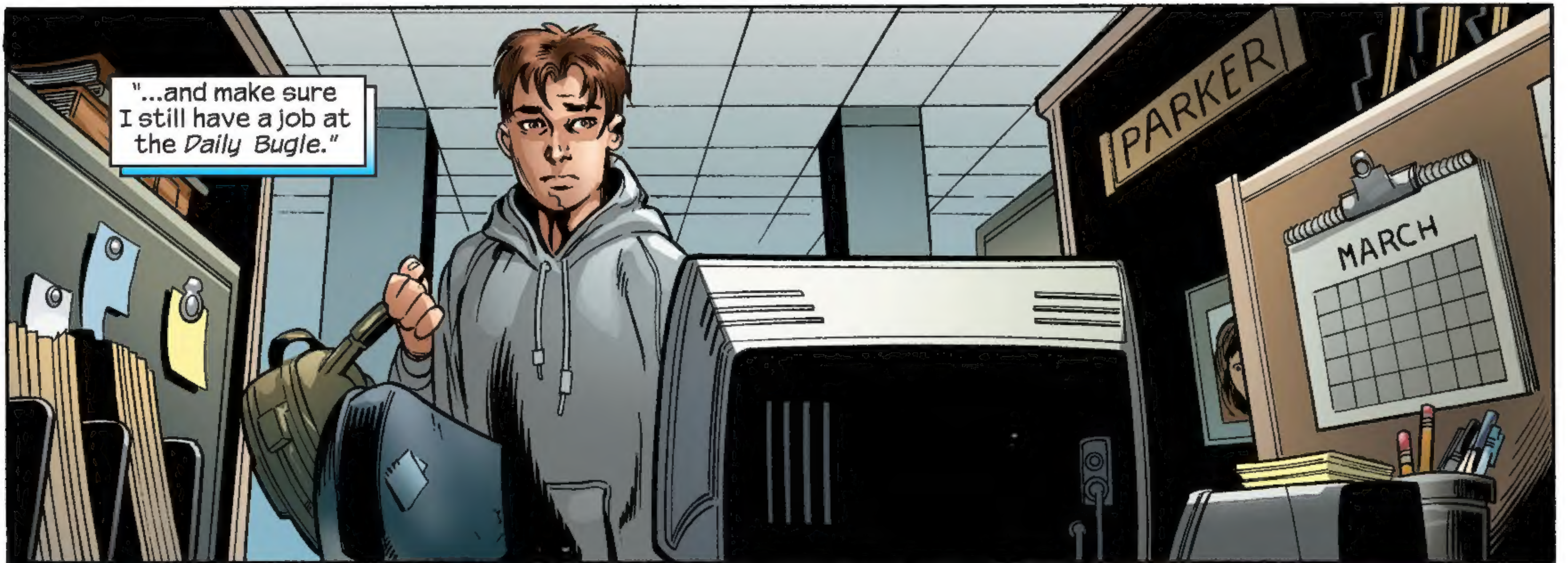


You
sure?

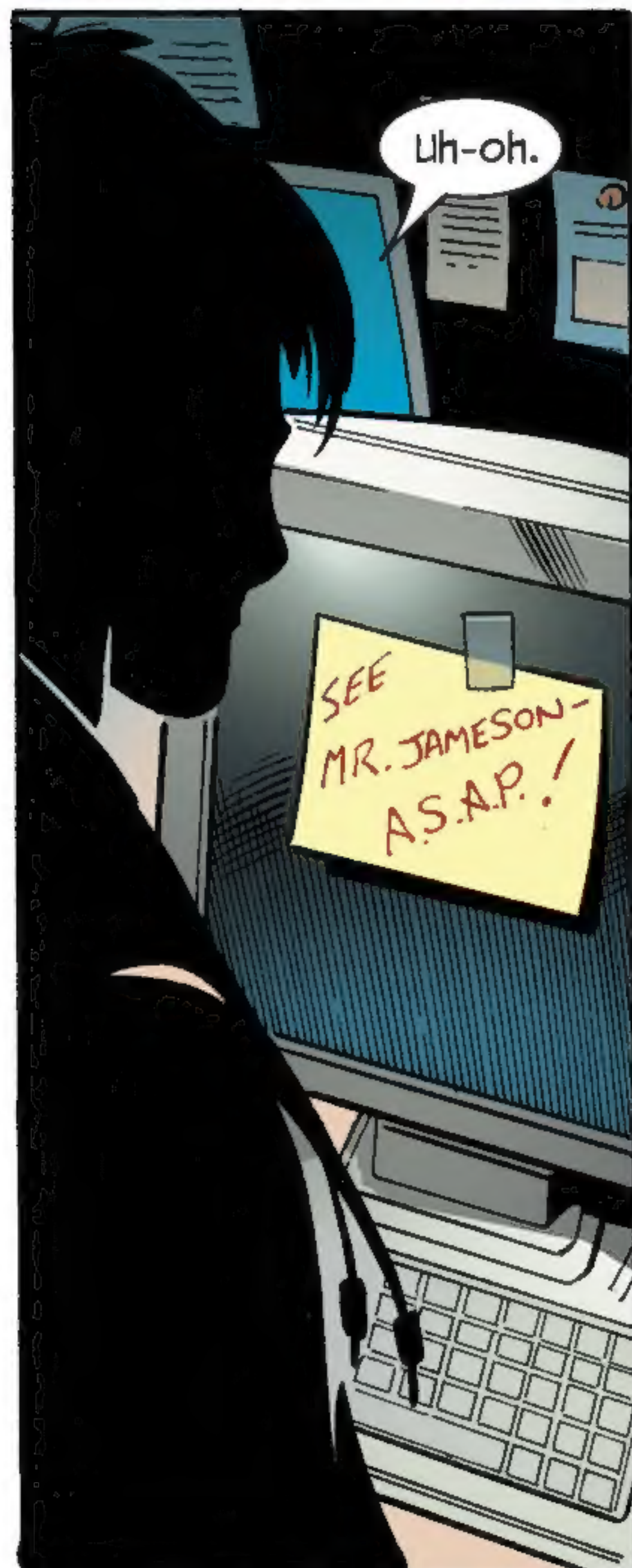
Totally.

I'll be back
in a few minutes,
I just have to
go...

It's just
like being at the
dentist but much,
uh, more insane.

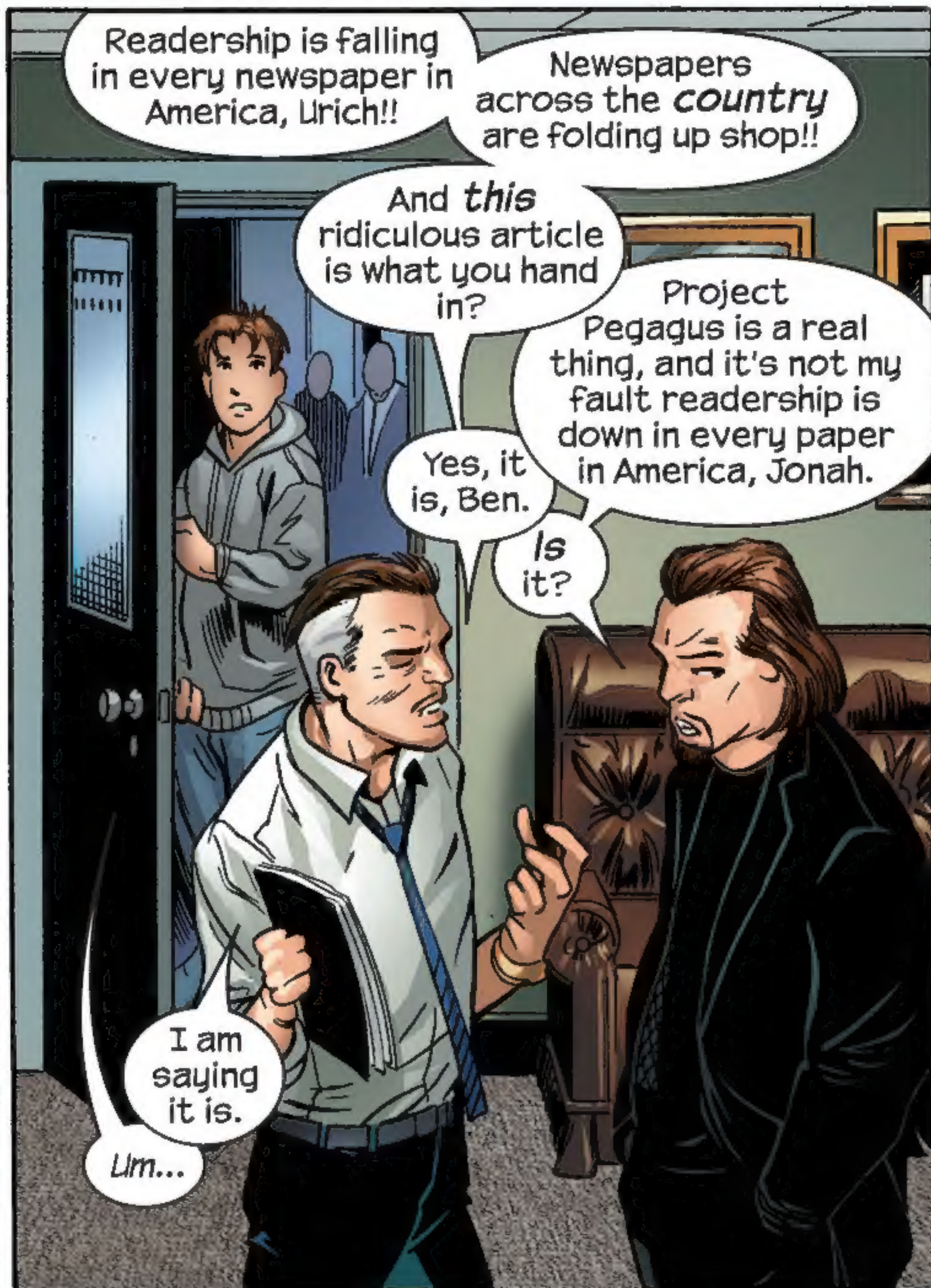


"...and make sure I still have a job at the *Daily Bugle*."



Uh-oh.

SEE MR. JAMESON- A.S.A.P.!



Readership is falling in every newspaper in America, Ulrich!!

Newspapers across the *country* are folding up shop!!

And *this* ridiculous article is what you hand in?

Project Pegagus is a real thing, and it's not my fault readership is down in every paper in America, Jonah.

Yes, it is, Ben.

Is it?

I am saying it is.

Um...



Oh, look who's here!!!

Hey, everybody!! It's Mister I-can-come-into-work-when-ever-I-want.

I--



"Am fired"?

"I don't work here anymore"?

"I just learned a hard life lesson"?



I'm fired?

Again?



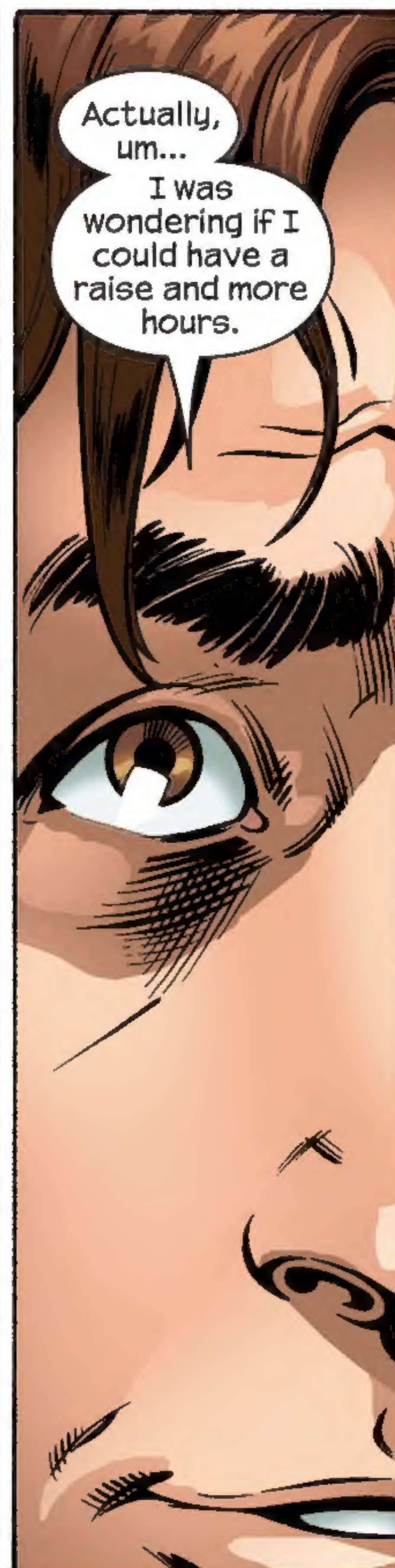
Parker came to work here for life lessons.

You don't show up to work, you get fired.

It's a life lesson and I just taught it to you.

Today you are a man.

Buh-bye.



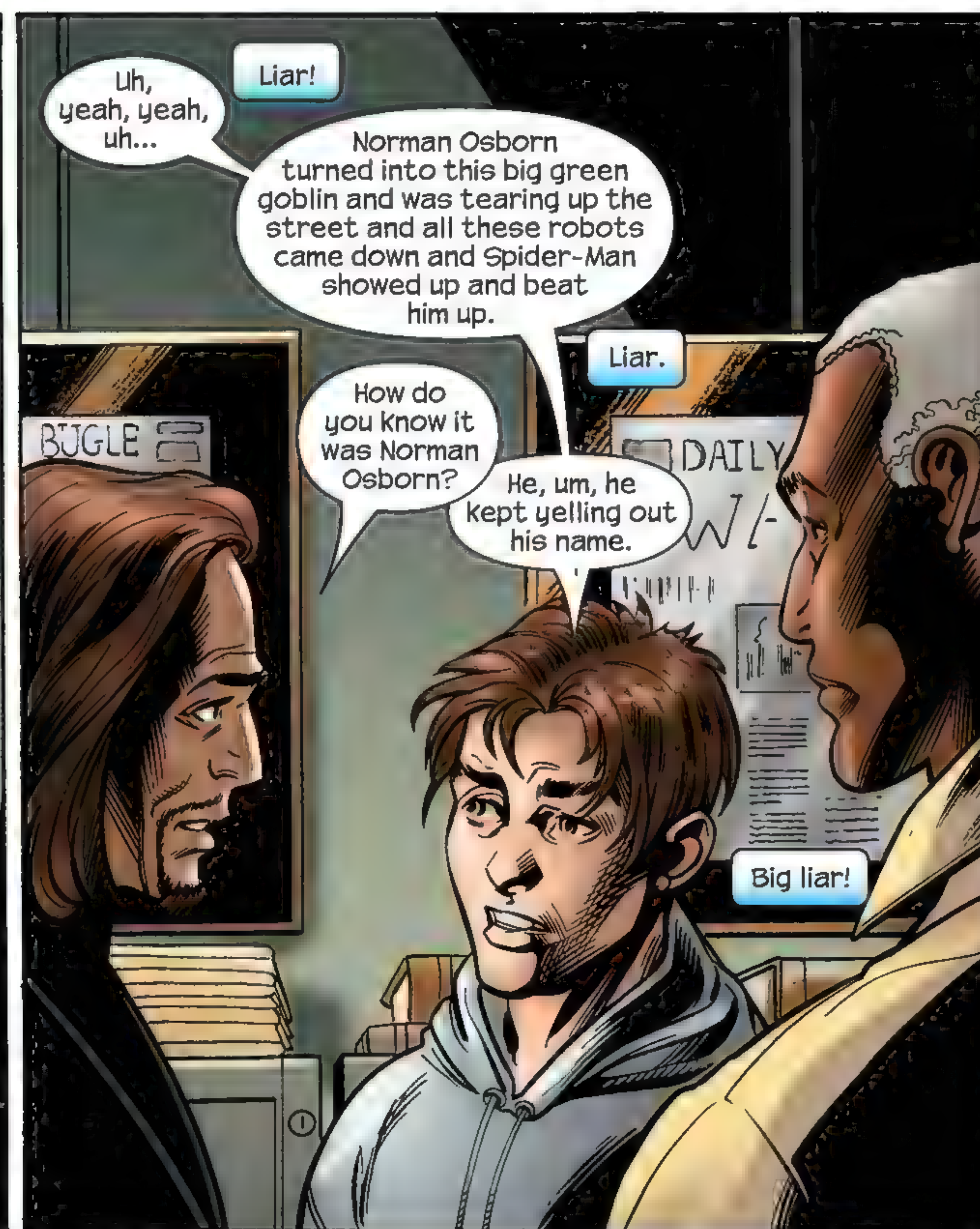


With my aunt in the hospital...

Wait, were you *home* when this thing went down in Queens?

Uh... yes.

You saw it?



Uh, yeah, yeah, uh...

Liar!

Norman Osborn turned into this big green goblin and was tearing up the street and all these robots came down and Spider-Man showed up and beat him up.

How do you know it was Norman Osborn?

He, um, he kept yelling out his name.

Liar.

Big liar!



My house was totally trashed. They're fixing it now.

Can I get pictures?

Of my house?

Yeah.

Uh, yeah, you better hurry.



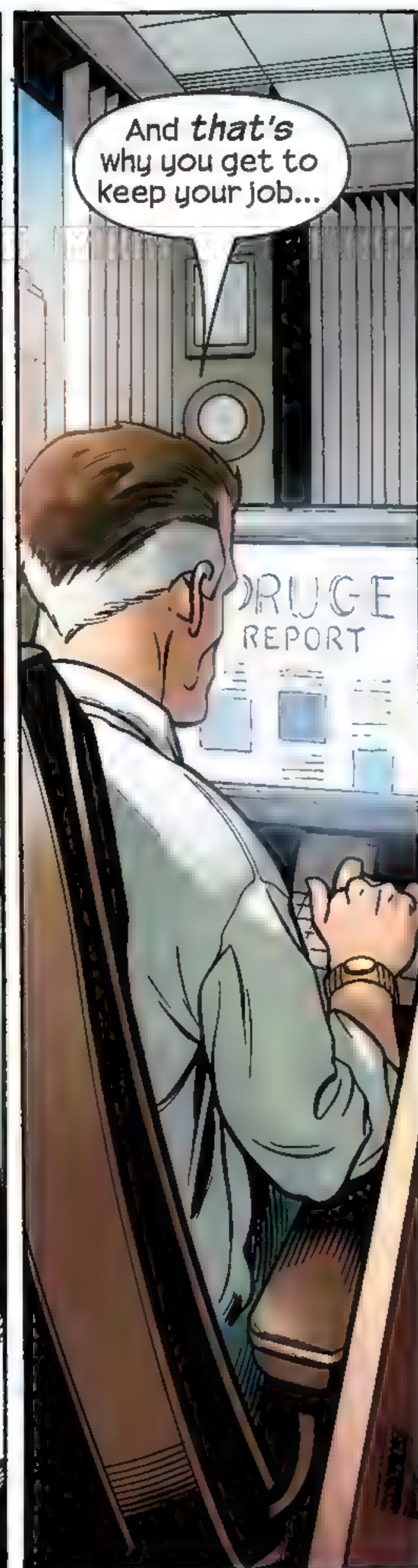
Ulrich??



(I'm on it.)

Front page! World-exclusive!

Spider-Man versus the Green Goblin. The Bugle has the exclusive story. Eyewitness account.



And *that's* why you get to keep your job...



Um...



And a...tiny raise.

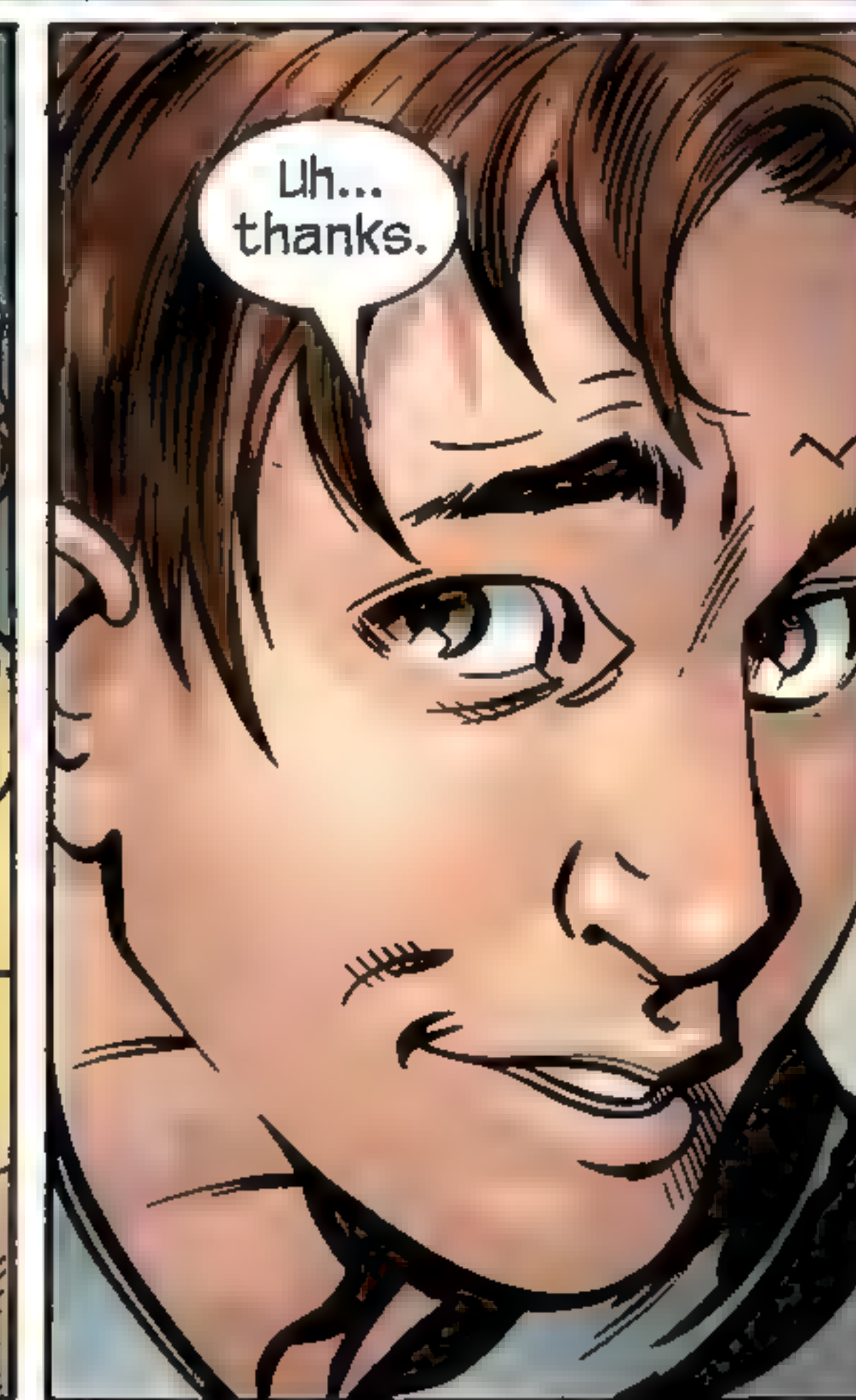
And you can work weekend edition.



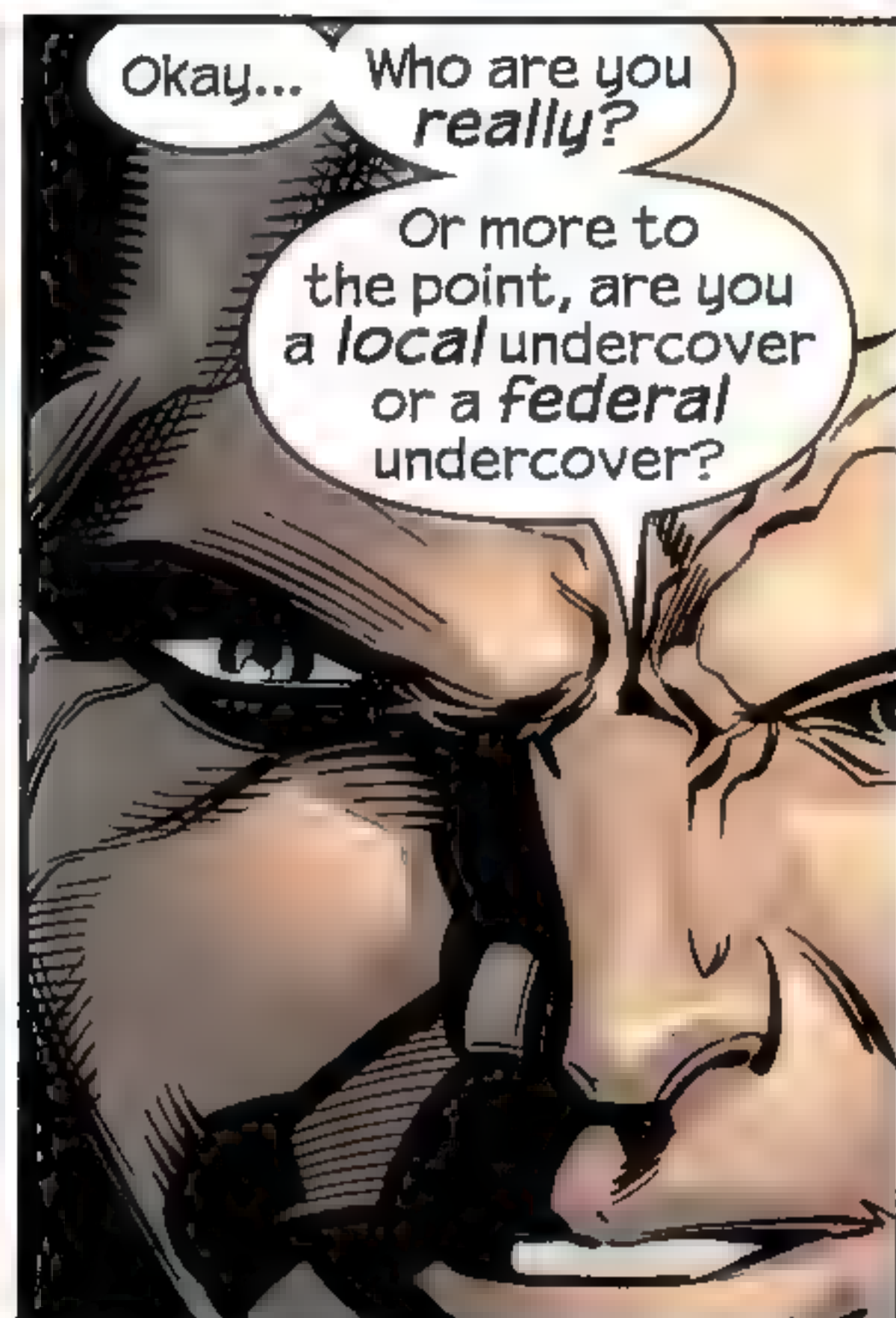
Really? Wow.

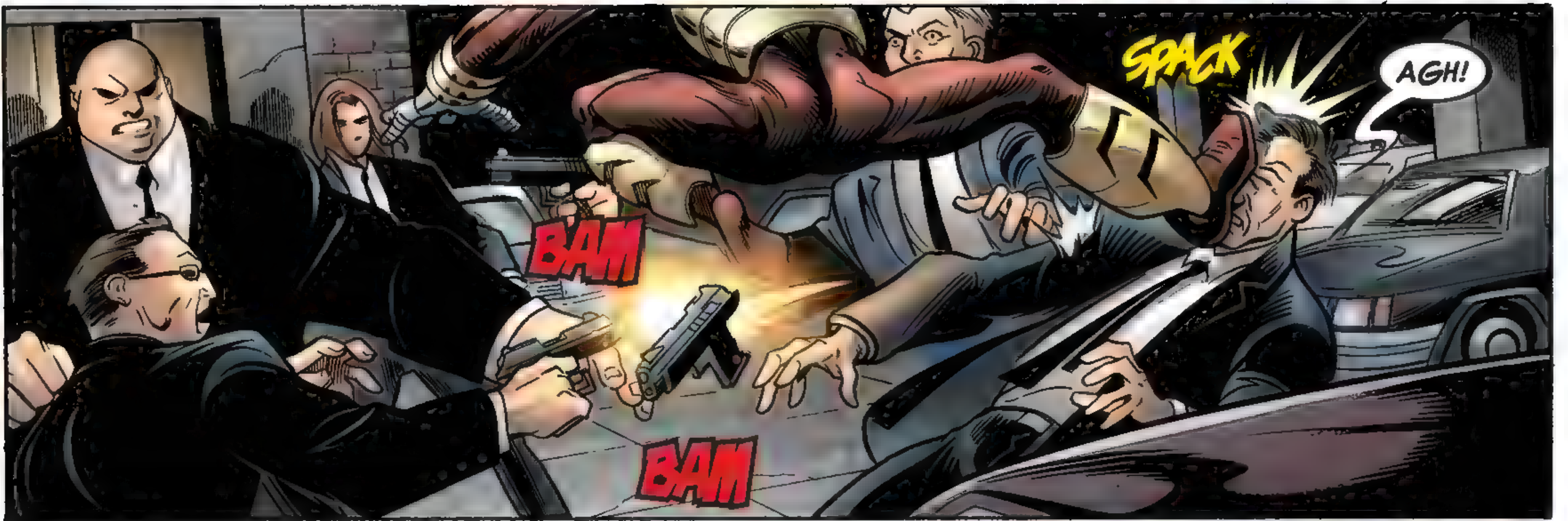
You're- you're just an awesome guy.

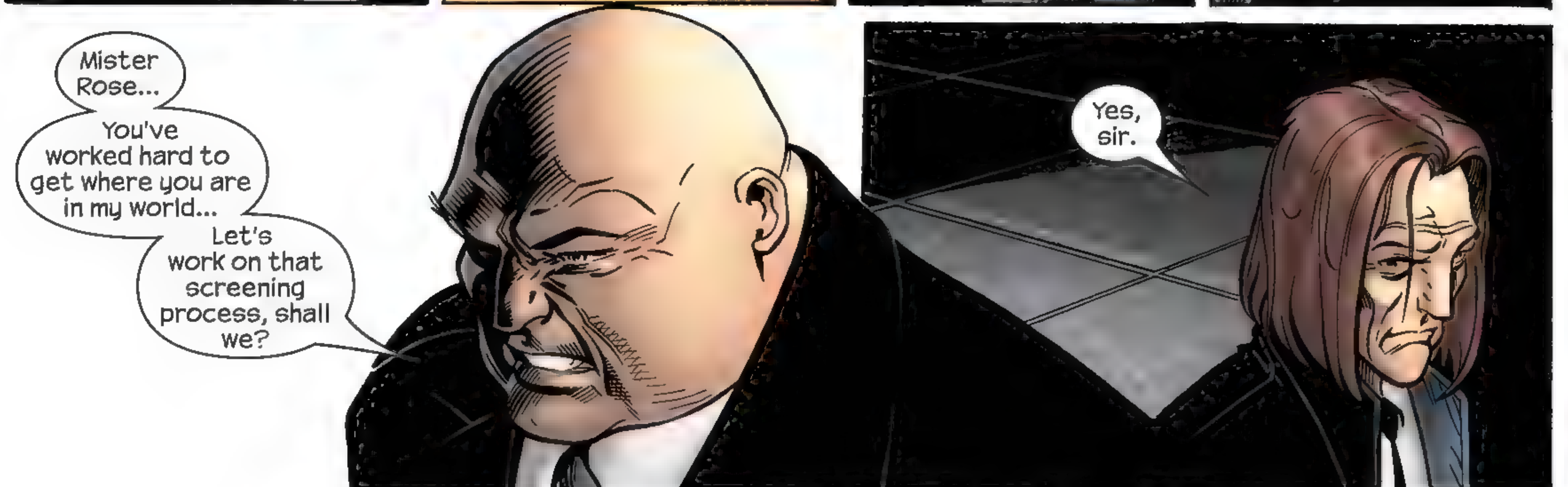
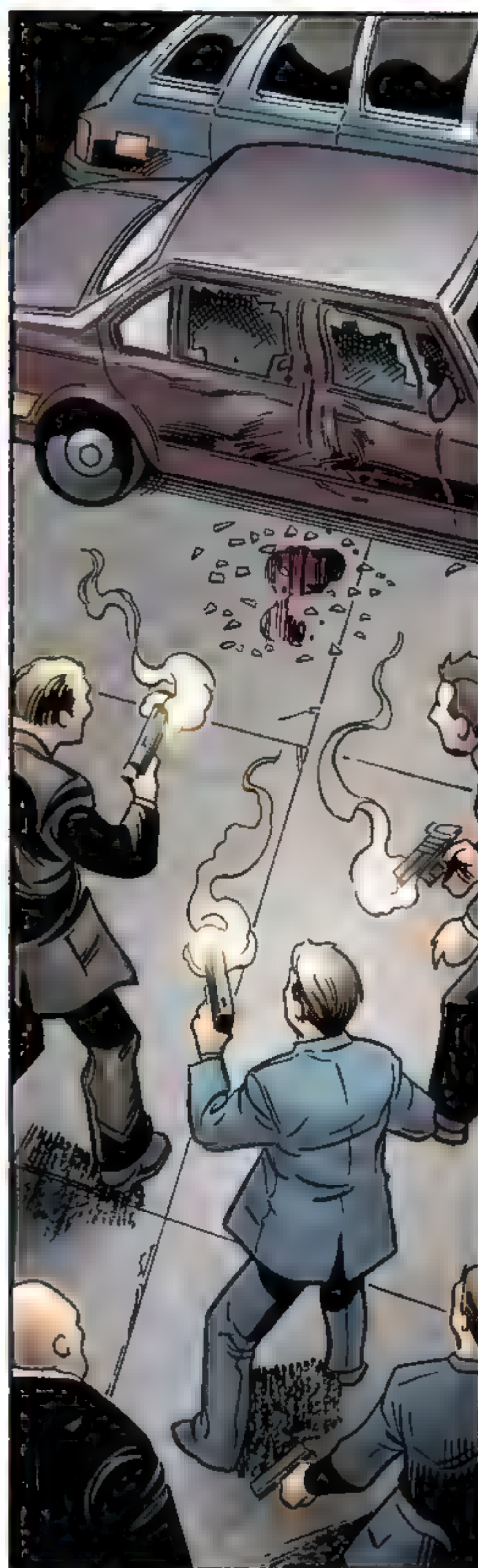
I don't know why everyone says you're such a--

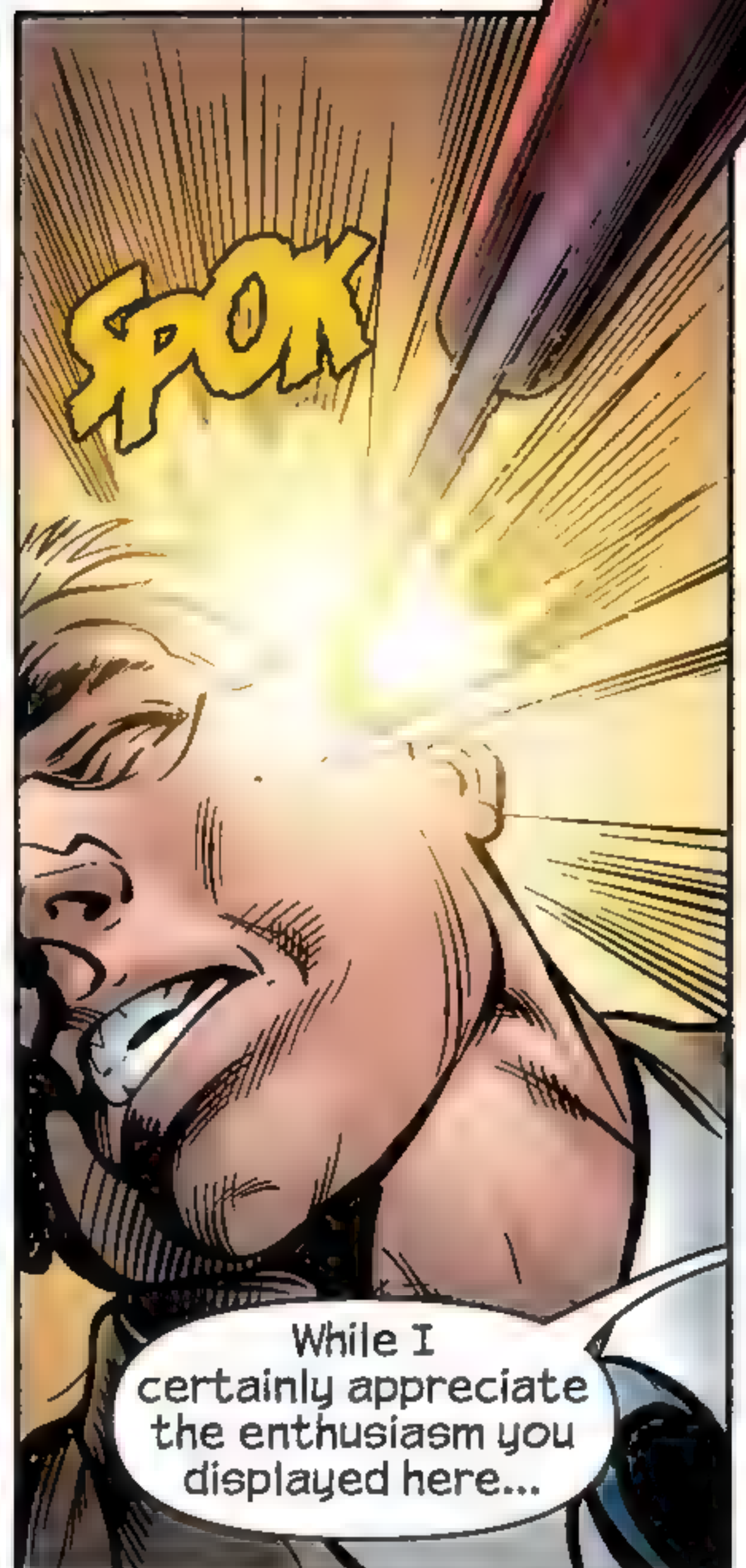


Uh... thanks.











She's okay.

Clean bill of health.

Did you tell them about the nightmares?

Peter!!

It's important.

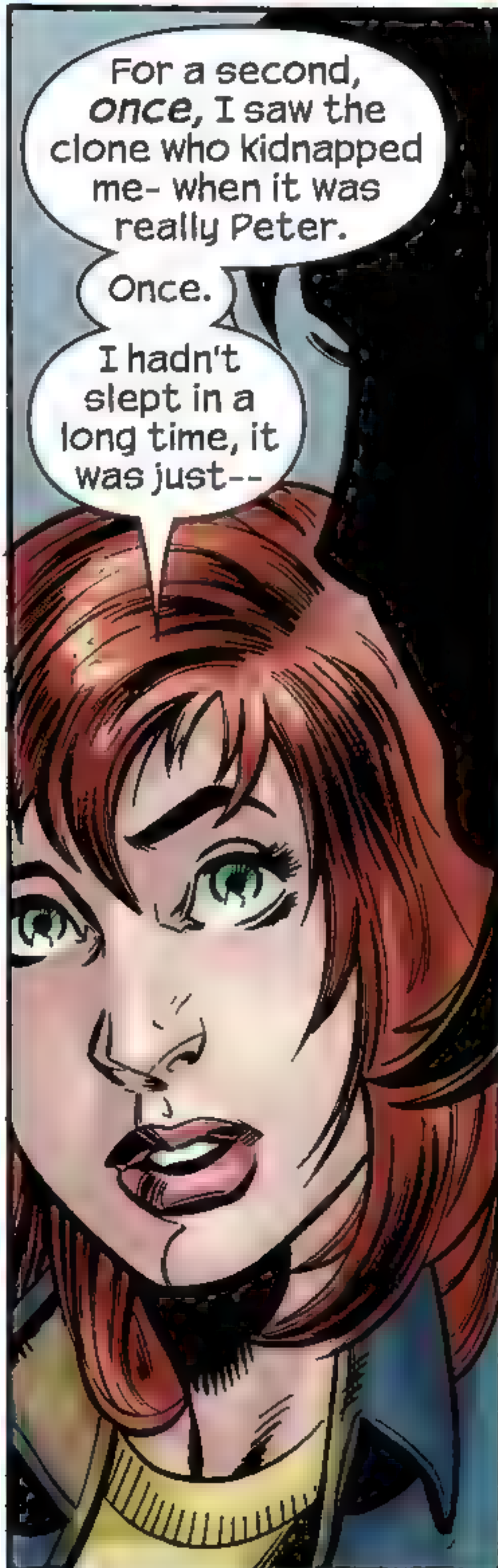


What kind of nightmares?

Well, she has them but she also, she sees things, sometimes, that aren't there.

Like what?

(Oh my God...)



For a second, *once*, I saw the clone who kidnapped me- when it was really Peter.

Once.

I hadn't slept in a long time, it was just--



Post-traumatic stress.

Exactly.



Which means?

It was a traumatic event, you were victimized, verbally and physically.

Has it happened to you?

No, but--

It's happened to me.



Really, Ben?

Yeah, last month I thought I saw *Mole Men* in our kitchen... but they weren't there. It was just a second.

Really!?

It's just...your brain working it out.

That's what I thought. It's some crazy stuff we've seen. I mean, *look at me*.

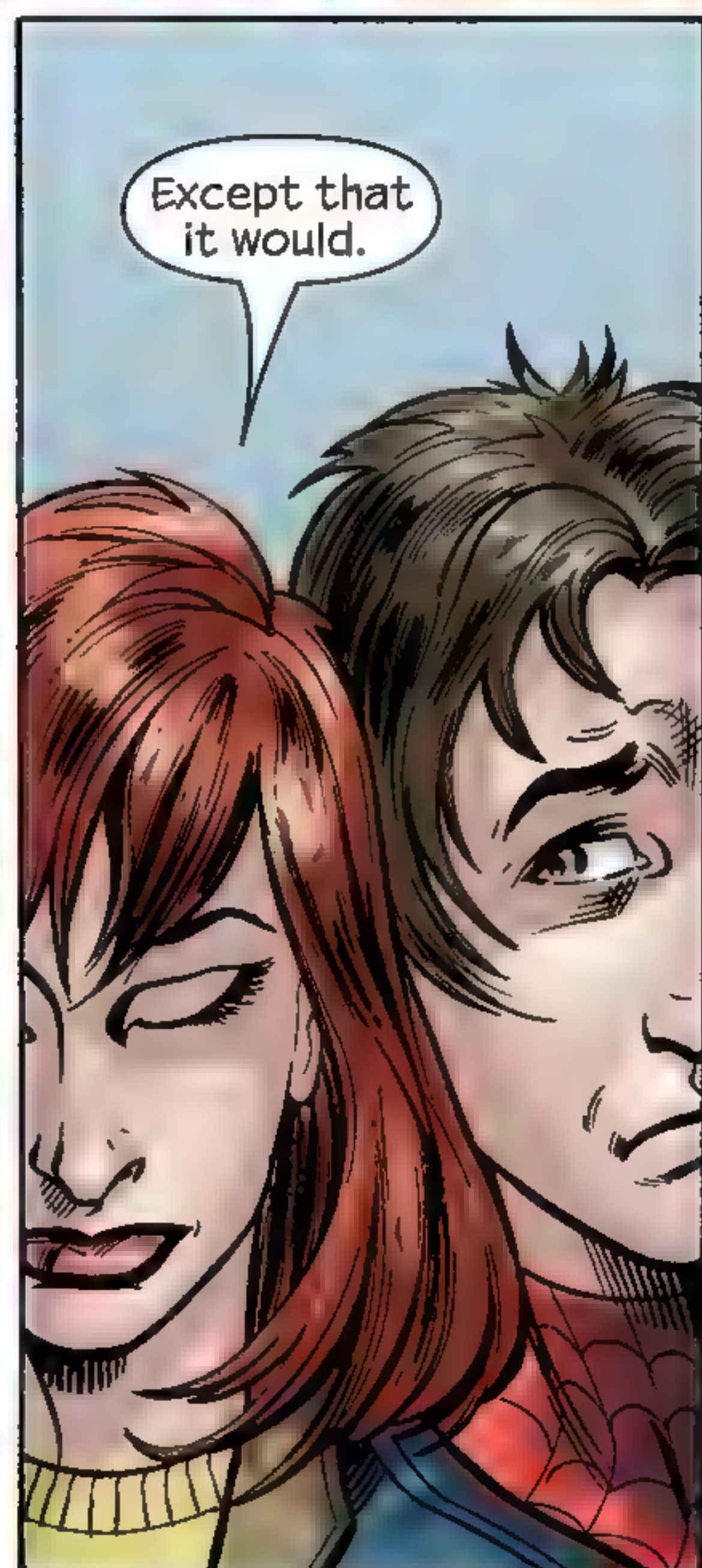


So it's... normal?

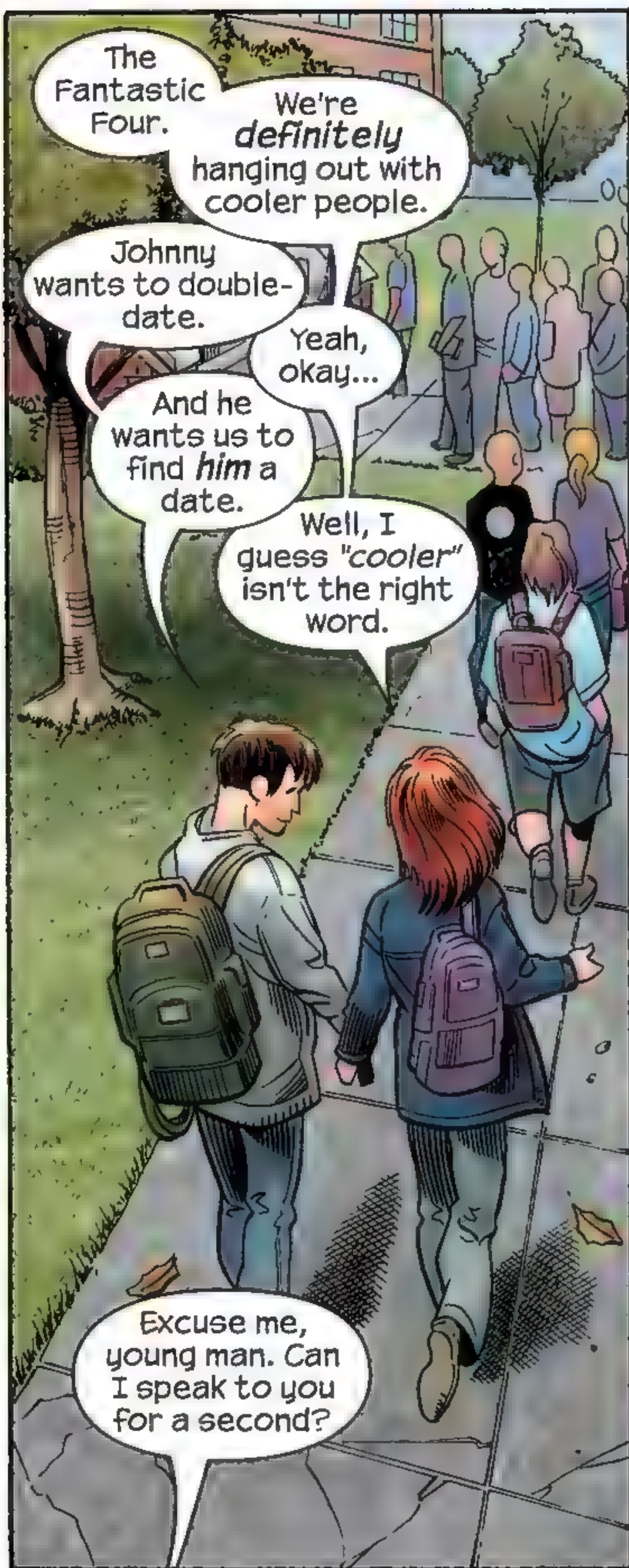
It's not *not* normal. But you want to keep an eye on it.

You want it to peter out, not take over your life.

A therapist wouldn't be a bad idea.



Except that it would.



The Fantastic Four.

We're **definitely** hanging out with cooler people.

Johnny wants to double-date.

Yeah, okay...

And he wants us to find **him** a date.

Well, I guess "cooler" isn't the right word.

Excuse me, young man. Can I speak to you for a second?



Who are you?

Matthew Murdock, attorney-at-law. May I speak with you?



Go inside.

What is this?

Go, I'll meet you in there.



Who are you?

I told you. Do you recognize my voice?

Kind of.

Calm down. We're friends.

I **am** calm.



You're not. I can **hear** your heart, I can **smell** your perspiration.



I **do** know your voice.

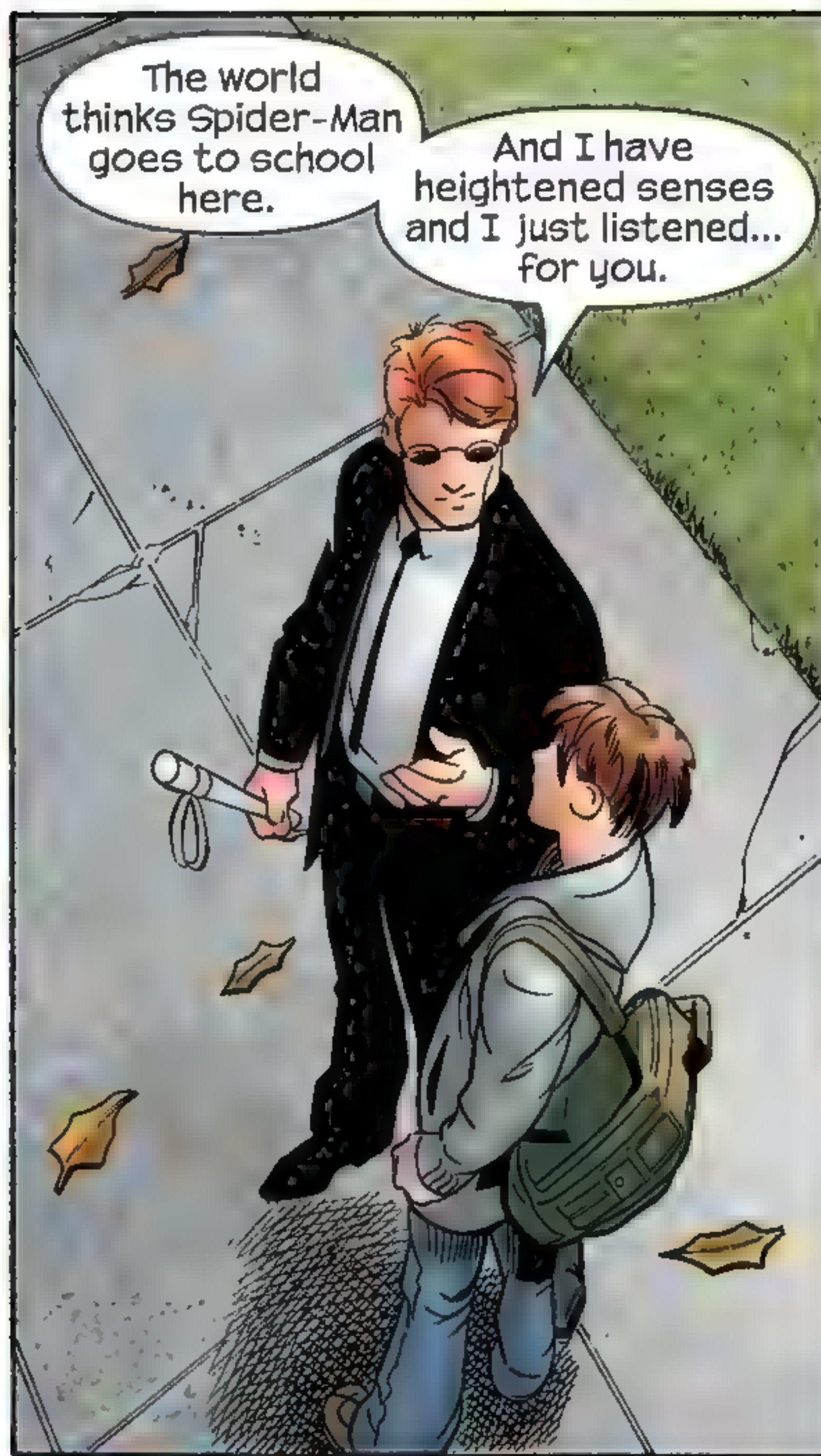


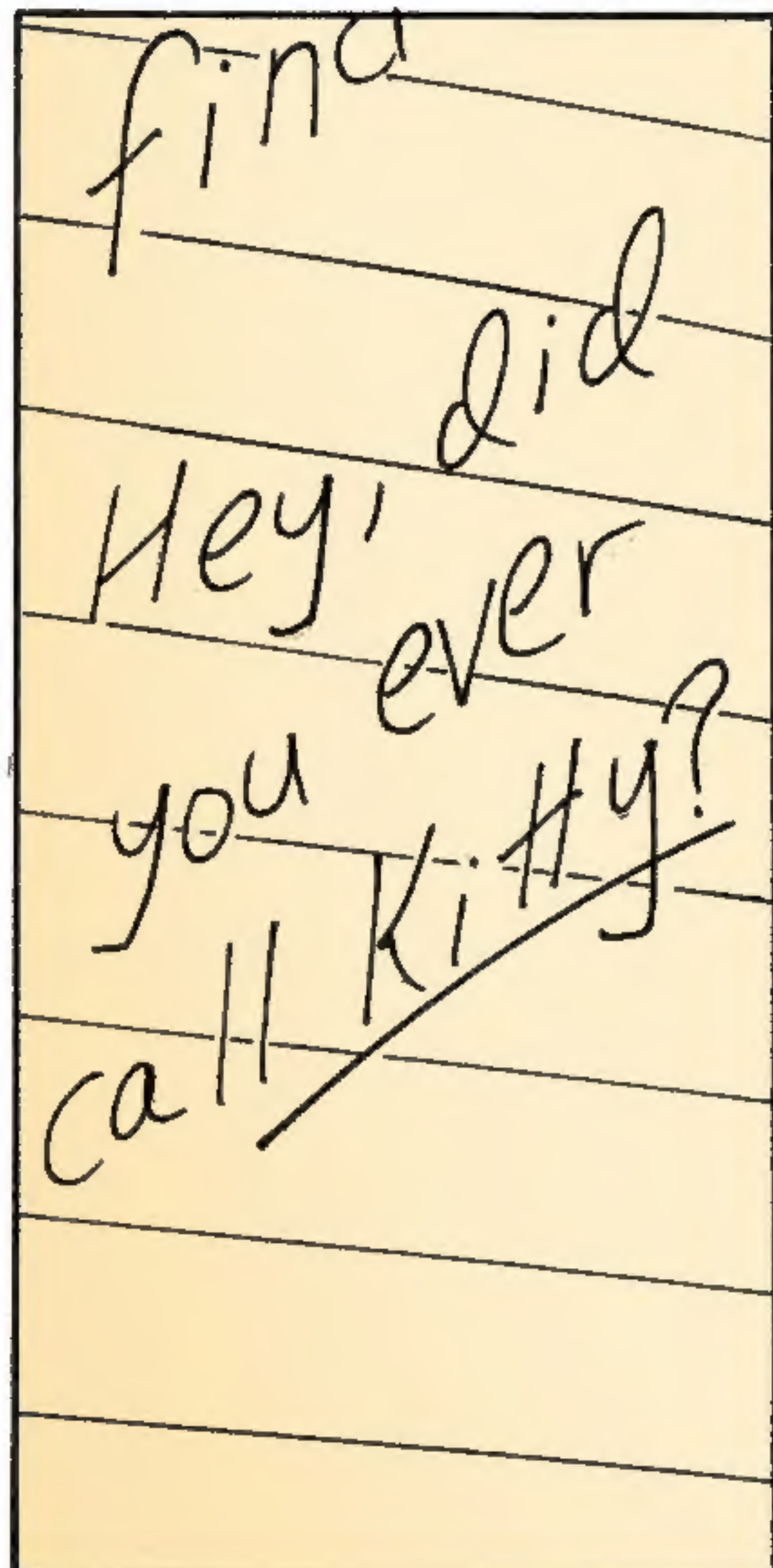
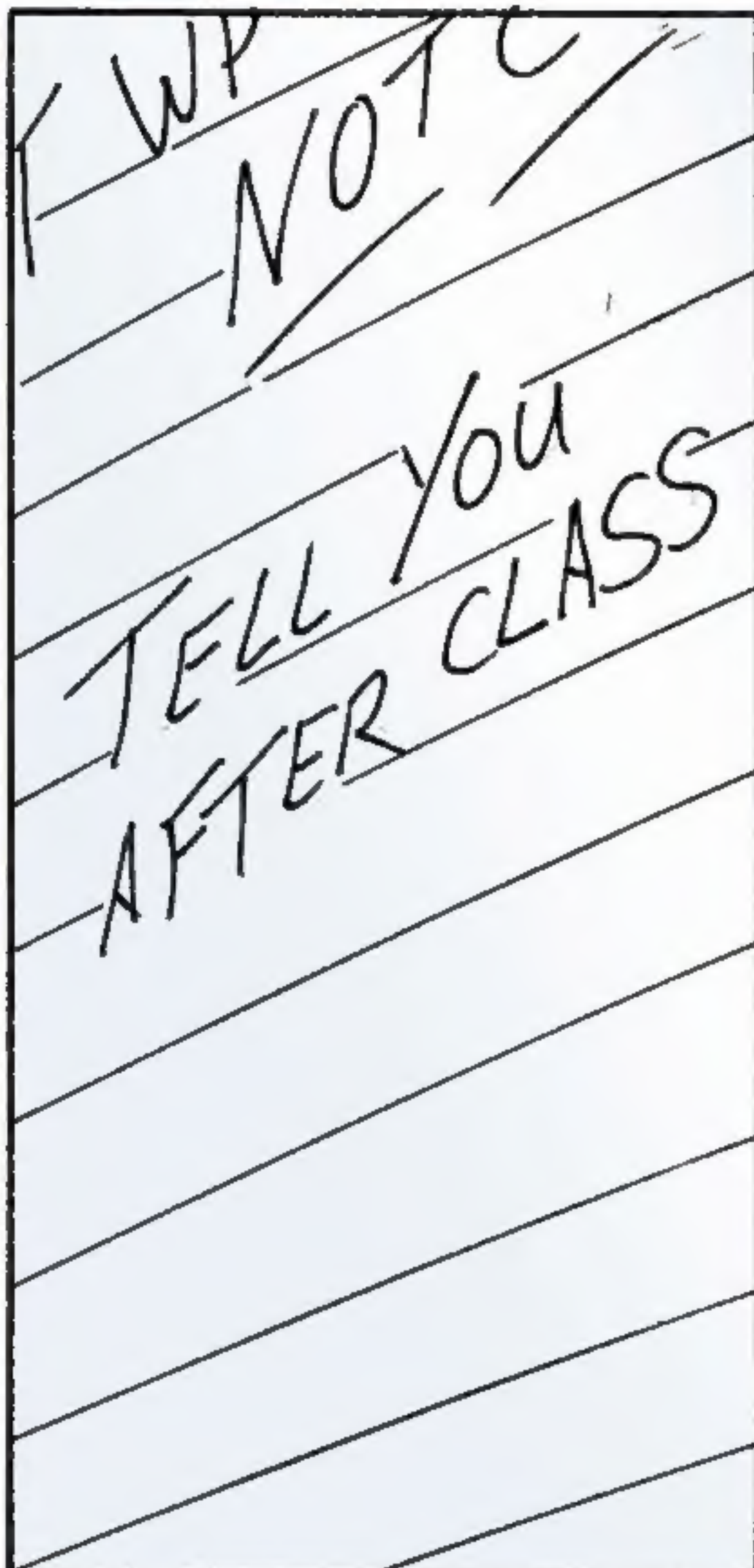
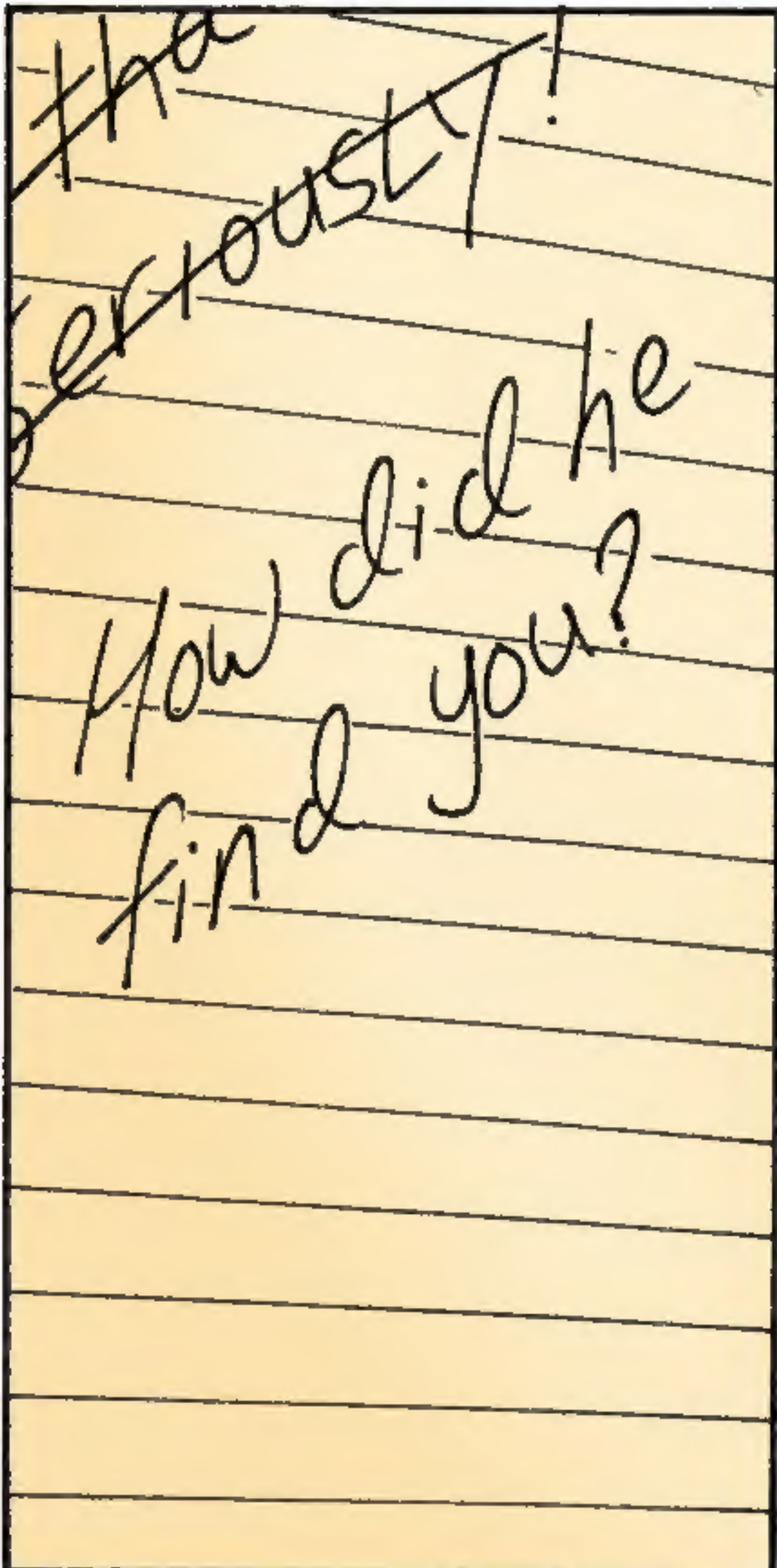
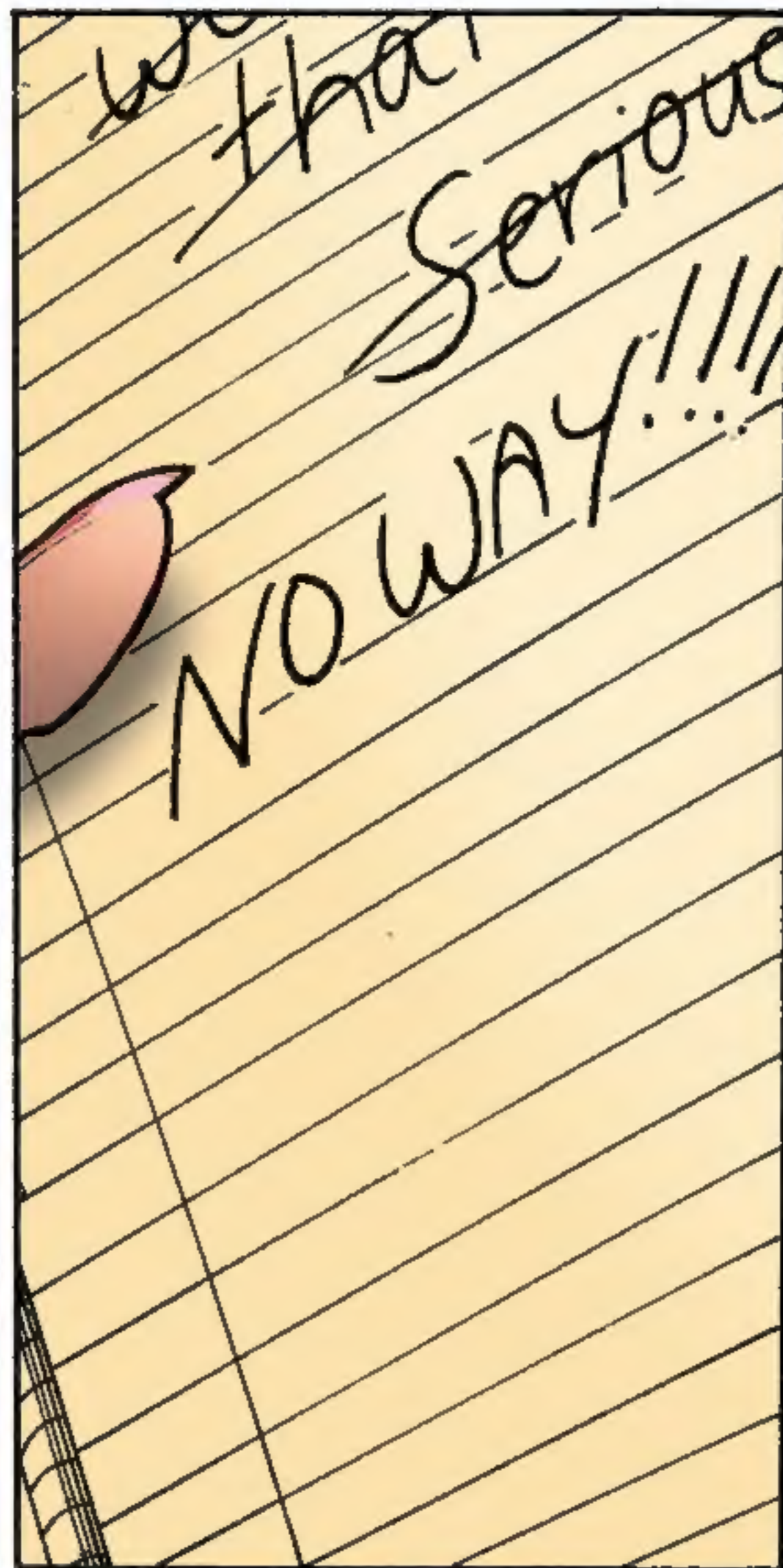
What if...

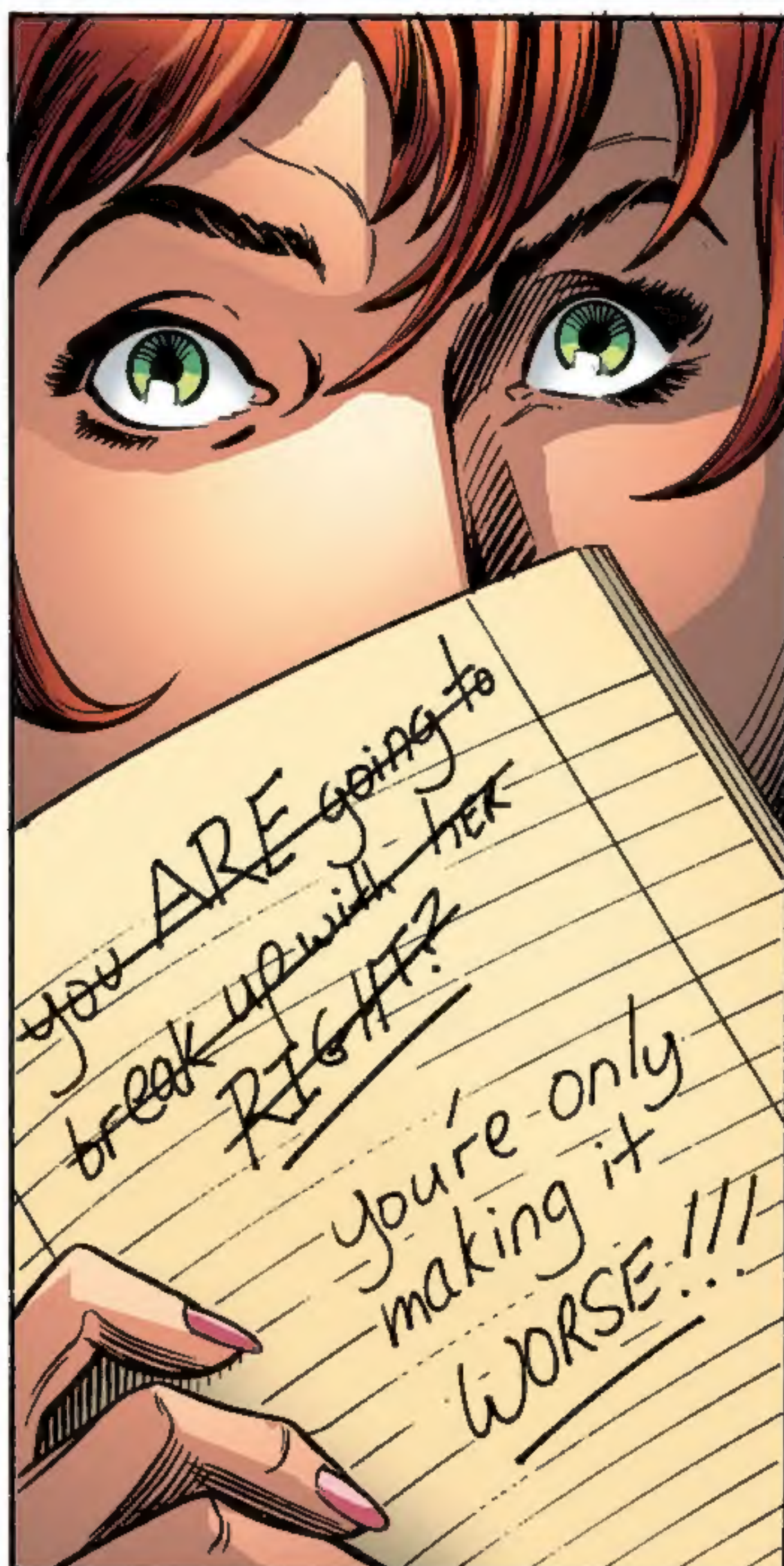
I called you a "baby who has no excuse for being in a costume and you should get your immature butt home before you get yourself, or more importantly me, killed?"



Daredevil.









Class...
Welcome
Kitty Pryde to
Midtown High
School.

I think
this'll be very
good for
everyone.



 To be continued...



SON OF

VULTURON